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THE

WORKS

OF THE

Reverend and Learned

Mr. *HENRY GROVE*,

Of TAUNTON:

Containing

All the Sermons, Diſcourſes, and Tracts publiſhed in his Life-Time.

In FOUR VOLUMES.

LONDON:

Printed and Sold by JAMES WAUGH, at the *Turk's Head* in *Gracechurch-ſtreet*.

MDCCXLVII.

SERMONS

ON THE

Following SUBJECTS,

VIZ.

The Duty of Peaceableneſs.
The Grounds of Anniverſary Days.
Conſiderations on Time and Eternity.
Dying in Faith.
The Purpoſes of men broken off by Death.
Death aboliſhed by Jeſus Chriſt.
The Fear of Death a natural Paſſion.
On what Grounds we may deſire not to live always.
The great Uſefulneſs of good Examples.
On the Reſurrection of Jeſus.
On living unto Chriſt.

By the Reverend Mr. HENRY GROVE,
of TAUNTON.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

Printed and Sold by JAMES WAUGH, at the *Turk's Head* in *Gracechurch-ſtreet.*

MDCCXLVII.

THE

PREFACE.

THE requeſt of ſeveral pious and judicious perſons having determined us to give the Publick a new Edition of Mr. *Grove*'s Works, printed in his life-time, the Reader may be aſſured, that this Collection in Four Volumes, Octavo, contains all that were publiſhed by that great Man himſelf, either with or without his Name. As it may be a reaſonable entertainment to the curious, to trace ſuch a Genius from its Opening to its full Strength and Maturity, we have prefixed to each Piece the Date of its firſt Publication. The ſame ſpirit will be found to animate the whole, a rational and exalted Piety, a Love of Virtue, Liberty, and

and of Mankind, a ſtrong Senſe of Immortality, and a conſtant Concern ſo to repreſent all the Doctrines, Duties and Motives of Religion, as may make them with efficacy to conſpire in forming men to the Love of God, and an Imitation of him in true Goodneſs; that they might thus become meet to injoy the divine and eternal bleſſedneſs, to which the Goſpel and the Life of Chriſt direct them, and of which his Reſurrection gives us ſo glorious an aſſurance.

Theſe Works therefore will recommend themſelves to the wiſe and good; as I earneſtly recommend them, and the pious Reader in his peruſal of them, to the bleſſing of God.

THO. AMORY.

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The Duty of PEACEABLENESS
explained and enforced.

IN A

SERMON

PREACHED,

MARCH 30, 1712.

ON

ROM. XII. 18.

If it be poſſible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Occaſioned by

A Diſcourſe from the ſame Text, at *Taunton*-Aſſizes, *March* 25.

THE PREFACE.

WHEN the following Sermon was first composed, little did the Author imagine to what place it was afterwards to be sent. Had he dream'd of the Press, he would have hardly put off his work to the end of the Week; for it was not till Saturday *that he sat about it, unresolved till then whether he should preach upon the Subject. The Reader will be apt to think this a reason against publishing it; and would find no great difficulty to bring me of the same mind. But what shall I do? My Friends*

would needs have it printed, by whom I ſuffered myſelf to be overcome; the leſs unwillingly, becauſe if the compoſition was haſty, I conſidered the more moderate would be my reader's expectation.

To thoſe that ſhall further demand why the Sermon was preached, let me anſwer, it was in defence of a deſpiſed forſaken ſort of People, (amongſt whom, notwithſtanding, I think it my Duty to bleſs God I was born and educated) as well as of the Apoſtle Paul, *whom I was a little moved to ſee ſo barbarouſly miſrepreſented.*

This I will acknowledge, that if we vindicated ourſelves as often as we are aſſaulted from the Pulpit, we might be juſtly eſteemed to have forgot the true end of preaching, which is not to perſwade men to be followers of us, but of Chriſt. But at a time when the common cry is againſt us, and many perſons, full of hopes to ſee us more thoroughly mortified, look upon what is already done in our prejudice, as nothing, we muſt be pardoned if we cannot ſit down wholly ſilent and unconcerned.

A word or two with the Reverend Mr. Potter, *and I have done. Why, I beſeech you, were the* Occaſional Conformiſts *haled in? I thought we ſhould have heard no more from you on that head; that your fraternity, though never accuſed of an exceſs of good nature, would*

would at leaſt have been pacified by the late Act againſt them. But it is plain, I did not know you. Forgive me this injury. We will ſuppoſe the Occaſionaliſts *to be even as bad as they have been painted out to the world, hath not the Government chaſtiſed them? And ſhould not that ſatisfy? In more criminal caſes we ſee thoſe very perſons that are moſt intent to have juſtice done on a malefactor, are yet ſo generous as to pity him when that comes to take place. But ſhall I be free? Why then, between you and me, I would fain have your aſſiſtance in one thing. You admit to your Communion men that are manifeſtly of no church, unleſs you will ſay they are of the Synagogue of Satan, and who, every body is ſenſible, can have no other motive in receiving, but to qualify them for a Place: this you can do, and be very quiet, as if all were well; but for Diſſenters, tho' ſober men and good chriſtians, and tho' it was their profeſſed principle, before the Teſt was impoſed, to ſhew the good temper they were in towards the Church of* England *by occaſionally communicating with her, for theſe to mix in your ſolemnities is reckoned unpardonable. Let me into the true reaſon of this different proceeding, and you oblige me unexpreſſibly. You do not think ſure, it was a fault in the Diſſenters to have ſo much charity for your church: if you thought this their error, and were reſolved to convince*

them of it, I own no methods could be more likely to do it than those that have been lately taken. Let me intreat you to do me one favour more, and frankly tell me what Logic you use, when from Occasional *Communion you argue to* Constant? *Good Sir, did you never pay a friendly visit to certain folks, with whom nevertheless you would not care to pass your life? The application is easy.*

That you may not think it much to gratify me in this, I shall by way of encouragement tell you something for your information, and that is, that our Academies *are not those dangerous places which you would have people believe them to be. The common charge, is our poisoning the minds of Youth with* Ill Principles. *That we corrupt their* Manners *is not pretended; for tho' we are no better than we should be, yet I believe the world is agreed, we need not shun a comparison with our neighbours. And in truth, there is as little foundation for the charge of* Ill Principles. *By* Ill Principles, *I presume, cannot be meant the Errors of* Deists, Socinians, Papists, *&c. We are content the matter should be tried by a poll; and if, taking your own Articles for the rule of decision, the number of the Orthodox be greater amongst you, than in proportion among us, condemn us without mercy.*

As for Principles *destructive of the* Monarchy *or* Church, *we will be bold to say, that*

Her

Her Majesty hath not more Loyal Subjects, nor the Church any that are more candid and charitable in their Dissent from her, than those that have had their Education with Us; and we should not think we had any reason to complain, if no more pains were taken at the Universities *to prejudice your Youth against us, by unkind, not to say unfair, representations of us, and keeping them from an impartial view of the Controversy on both sides; than,* Vice Versa, *are used by us with our Youth to possess them with hard thoughts of you.*

Having thus had the true state of the case laid before you, pray Sir, do us the justice to set your friends right in this matter; and tell them moreover, that besides the injustice of it, there is no policy in endeavouring to suppress the Nurseries of learning amongst us. For what can you propose by it? You will say, To prevent the propagating the Schism. But, with submission, this is a most fond expectation. For supposing the Dissenters incapacitated for giving their children a liberal education, yet doubtless they will breed them up in their own way; so that there will be still such a species of men as are called Dissenters, who if they cannot be supplied with Teachers from the Schools of the Prophets, will make them Priests of the lowest of the People, and whoever will shall be consecrated. Now we have been often told, that it is our ignorance, or want of enlarging our

minds by wider and more ingenuous notions of things, that renders us so averse to Conformity; by taking from us therefore the keys of knowledge, you do by your own confession put a greater bar in our way to the church; not to add, that this hard usage will be an additional means of souring our temper.

SERMON I.

The Duty of Peaceableneſs.

ROM. XII. 18.

If it be poſſible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

IT was lately obſerved by One that preached from this Text, that as the excellency of the Chriſtian Religion appears in other reſpects, ſo particularly in this, that it conſults the peace and quiet of the world, tending to take men off from their mutual jars and contentions, and unite them in one general bond of love and friendſhip.

This

This Obſervation was certainly well grounded, and very proper to the Text, as the Text was to the Occaſion; and from theſe good beginings I was ready to flatter myſelf, that the Preacher, who by his character and office ought to be a ſon of peace, would have given us a healing and pacifick diſcourſe; inſtead of which, to be entertained with a violent invective againſt all that had not the happineſs to be of his judgment, was, I confeſs, a great ſurprize to me, as I believe it was to his whole Auditory, excepting ſome few that knew the man and his way. Never, thought I then, did Text and Sermon agree worſe; never was Obſervation made more ſuitable to what went before, or unſuitable to what followed; and if this Place of Scripture may be made to ſpeak what is ſo directly contrary to its deſign, I ſhall no longer wonder, if, as the Preacher ſaid, *Every Fanatick hath a Text for his Opinion.*

And now having acquainted you with the reaſon of my preſent choice of this ſubject, I ſhall try whether the words read have not another, and more favourable meaning than ſome men care to take notice of—And in order to this do lay down the following Doctrine.

That notwithſtanding it be next to impoſſible to live peaceably with all men, yet we are obliged to do what in us lies towards it.

In

In the handling of which Propoſition, I ſhall,

I. Explain the Duty here enjoined, *Living peaceably, as much as in us lieth, with all men.*

II. Shew why we are not to expect the full accompliſhment of our wiſhes and endeavours in this caſe; or whence it becomes a thing impoſſible to *live peaceably with all men.*

III. That although perfect peace and quiet cannot be hoped for, yet we are bound to do our utmoſt for the obtaining it.

I. I ſhall explain the Duty here enjoined, and that as to its Nature, its Objects, and its Limitation.

1. The Duty recommended is *living peaceably*, an expreſſion capable both of an *active* and a *paſſive* ſenſe. In an *active* ſenſe he lives peaceably, who does not moleſt others; in a *paſſive*, he that is unmoleſted by them. The firſt is always in our power, the ſecond is not; the one therefore is the duty of all without exception, the other the peculiar happineſs of a few.

1. A chriſtian ſhould be himſelf a man of a peaceable temper and behaviour; ſhould be never known to offer an affront, or do an

an injury; never go about to hinder another in the injoyment of his juſt rights and liberties; never break in upon the publick tranquility by a factious turbulent carriage; or upon the private peace of his neighbour by a quarrelſome contentious humour, but rather in word and action ſhould be an example to the world of univerſal charity and good-will. The good man's firſt aim is at peace within, to have a quiet conſcience and well-governed paſſions; his next care is to eſtabliſh and cultivate peace without, that the world may be in a condition, reſembling the halcyon quiet of his breaſt, as in the quiet ſerenity of his breaſt there is a reſemblance of heaven. The good man labours to keep all in peace round about him; allays heats, reconciles differences, and brings thoſe to a right underſtanding of one another that before were at variance. All this he does as he hath opportunity and a call to it; or if he cannot obtain and preſerve peace as he deſires, at leaſt he will do nothing on his part to violate it. But, ah, how few are the men of this character! The generality of the world appear little ſollicitous for the peace of it. We ſhould thank ſome if they would not make it their ambition and pleaſure to throw it into confuſion, being ſuch enemies to peace that they will not ſuffer their neighbour to live quietly by them; not becauſe he hath done them any

any wrong, but merely becauſe he cannot be of the ſame opinion that they are. Nay, they have a ſpite againſt a man on the ſcore of his peaceableneſs. You are all convinced, that this is not what is meant *by living peaceably*.

2. As we ſhould be free from the imputation of infringing other people's peace, ſo ſhould we put them under as little temptation as we can of diſturbing ours; endeavouring by the moſt prudent management, to diſarm their rage, aſſwage their malice, and prevail with them to lay aſide their evil intentions againſt us. It is as much our intereſt as our duty to endeavour this; and if we do not ſucceed, at worſt we have this to comfort us, that the guilt of the contention lieth all on their ſide, tho' we, perhaps, feel more of its pernicious effects than they, Having thus briefly explained the Nature of the Duty enjoined, I proceed to conſider,

II. The Objects of it, *Live peaceably with all men.* That is,

1. Not only with men of our own Principles and Party, but with others; even Heathens are not excepted; but on the contrary were thoſe whom the Apoſtle had principally his eye to, and towards whom he would have the profeſſors of Chriſtianity behave themſelves

themſelves in a moſt wining and affectionate manner. And is it not hard then that Chriſtians ſhould be excluded from the number of thoſe with whom we live in peace; ſuch as own the ſame *Lord*, the ſame *Faith*, the ſame *Baptiſm*; and this only for not faling in with us in things about which the Word of God hath left men at their liberty? Certainly that is not Chriſtian Peaceableneſs, which is confined, like Popiſh Salvation to a Party. He cannot be ſaid to *live peaceably with all men*, who lives peaceably with none but ſuch as make his faith and practice the ſtandard of theirs. You ſhall hear ſome proclaim themſelves *lovers of peace and union*; but how? They love that others ſhould unite with them in their ſentiments: and ſhew me the man that does not. Men of ſuch a narrow behaviour, who have a double face, one placid and ſmiling, which they turn towards their own company, the other fierce and cruel, with which they lower upon all beſides; that have a chriſtian tenderneſs for one another, (and this is more than ſome have) and hardly common humanity for the reſt of the world, can never imagine they have acquited themſelves of their duty, and done all that is required of them in the Text; they can never think ſo, unleſs their zeal have ſhrunk up their underſtandings as it hath done their charity. By what names ſoever men are pleaſed to call this

Party-

Party-Strife, it is really no other, in moſt, than ill nature, and betrays a ſpitiſh and ſavage temper of ſoul. I am bold to ſay this, becauſe they that are moſt furious againſt their brethren of another way, if their hands be tied up that they cannot be troubleſome to them as they would, fall out among themſelves, diſcharging that ill humour upon one another, which they can find no vent for upon Diſſenters. We may well complain of ſuch proceedings, but God forbid we ſhould imitate them, and ſo juſtify by our actions what in words we condemn.

2. We muſt live peaceably not only with thoſe that live peaceably with us, but with ſuch alſo as are otherwiſe inclined; that when they ſeek occaſions of ſtrife they may be diſappointed in not finding it; and if they begin a contention may be left to carry it on too by themſelves; or which is better, may drop it for want of ſome one to contend with. If they are rough and ſour, ſo much the more ſweetneſs and ſmoothneſs do you put on. Should a perſon be diſpoſed, out of temper, to raiſe feuds and diviſions, let him ſee by the contrary diſpoſition in you, what an odious work he is about; or if through deſign he labours to provoke you, and draw you of your guard, convince him by the ſettled calmneſs of your behavour that he is utterly miſtaken. To continue peaceable, when thus urged to the contrary, is noble

and

and praiſe-worthy; but if ye live peaceably with them alone that do the ſame with you, what thanks have ye? It would be well I profeſs for the world, if ſome people would go ſo far as this, if they would not be the firſt in the quarrel, yea, if they would not ſtudy how to ſtir up and cheriſh contention, but would let thoſe be quiet, who deſire nothing more than to be ſo; but even this would be ſuch a denial to them, that, little as it is in its ſelf, we muſt not expect that they will practice it, tho' if they did, they would have no pretence to make a merit of it; for where, I beſeech you, is the mighty virtue of being civil and inoffenſive to thoſe that gives us not the leaſt reaſon for the contrary? To thoſe that by their example teach us after what manner to converſe with them, and ſo order their whole conduct towards us, that if we fall out with them we muſt be perfectly void of excuſe? As therefore we would act up to the height of the precept, let us ſhew ourſelves peaceable with the angry, the froward, and the injurious.

3. We ought to live peaceably as well with thoſe beneath us, as with thoſe above us; as well with thoſe whom it is in our power to vex and perſecute, without danger of having the ſame treatment returned us, as with thoſe whom we cannot meddle with but to our own hurt. Some indeed

deed are as unquiet in a low condition, as they are inſolent in a higher one, and cannot ſit ſtill let what will be the conſequence: but, generally ſpeaking, men are moſt vexatious when they have got the higher ground, and are poſſeſt of power to juſtify and bear them out. Power is a thing that few know how to manage as they ought; it ſeldom does the owner any good, or is made uſe of by him to do good with to others, but is turned into an inſtrument of miſchief, and inſtead of being a guard upon the peace, proves a means of deſtroying it. And though it may be thought that Superiors are not concerned in the duty under conſideration, yet the contrary is evident; for if it be the duty of Servants and Subjects to lead peaceable and quiet lives under their Governors, it is alſo the duty of Governors to adminiſter no juſt ground of unquietneſs. If the Poor are not to do any thing that may incommode the Rich, in the enjoyment of their wealth, the Rich muſt not do any thing to grieve the Poor, and make them mutinous; remembring that Superiors are as truly guilty of the breach of this command, when they oppreſs, as Inferiors when they are heady and diſobedient. So much for the Objects of the Duty enjoined, *living peaceably with all men.*

III. The Limitation inſerted is remarkable, *as much as in you lieth*; intimating

that there are ſome things which we may and ought to do for peace ſake, and others that we may not.

1. There are ſome things which for peace ſake we ought to do. As

1. To put up leſſer injuries, *bearing with, and forbearing one another in love*; ſuitably to the advice in the verſe following my Text, *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourſelves, but rather give place unto wrath*; which words do very fitly ſtand in the next place to the command of *living peaceably with all men*, a forgiving temper being one of the moſt likely means to procure peace. *Give place unto wrath*; let the ſtorm have its way, and it will quickly ſpend itſelf; whereas oppoſition will but make the current ſwell and grow outragious. *Render not railing for railing, but contrariwiſe bleſſing; bleſs them that curſe you, and do good to them that deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you, for hereby you ſhall heap coals of fire on their head*; and convert enemies into friends.

2. Have more regard to the characters and tempers of perſons, and in matters indifferent comply with them, *becoming all things to all men*, by which means it is much if you do not gain ſome. If men look for reſpect give it them, tho' more than their due, rather than have a noiſe made about it. If they be rigid and inflexible in their way,

it

it will be your wiſdom ordinarily to yield to their humour; conſidering that when two hard bodies meet they oft-times ſtrike fire. Do not inſiſt too much upon the natural liberty of your actions, but in order to preſerve a good underſtanding between yourſelves, and thoſe you converſe with, come a little into their meaſures, and do as they would have you, when neither *conſcience* nor *convenience* require your refuſal. Aim at a univerſal complacency and ſoftneſs of manners, than which nothing more conciliates eſteem and love.

3. Keep the tongue under due government. [a] *Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; ſo is the tongue amongſt our members, that it defileth the whole body, and ſeteth on fire the courſe of nature, and is itſelf ſet on fire of hell.* Upon this head who can forbear thinking of a ſort of men that, by reaſon of the peculiar advantages they ſpeak with, being capable of imploying this member moſt uſefully, do but the more execution with it, mixing thoſe paſſions in the worſhip of the true God, which can be acceptable only to falſe ones; and inſtead of kindling in the hearts of their hearers the fire of charity, and the love of holineſs, enflaming them with a cruel hatred againſt their brethren? What ſaith the Apoſtle above quoted?

[a] Jam. iii. 5, 6.

Speaking of the tongue, [b] *Therewith* (ſaith he) *bleſs we God even the Father, and therewith curſe we men who are made after the ſimilitude of God. Out of the ſame mouth proceedeth bleſſing and curſing. My Brethren, theſe things ought not ſo to be.* Good God, muſt the abilities of the Preacher, and the authority that accompanies his preaching, ſerve to no higher purpoſes? Were the gifts of eloquence and perſuaſion beſtowed to do hurt withal? The truth is, if the matter were not too ſerious for it, it would make one ſmile to hear men exaggerating and pathetically bewailing thoſe Diviſions which they themſelves are the cauſe of. All the outcry is againſt Diſſenters, whilſt it is not the Diſſenter that is ſo troubleſome to his neighbours, but a certain Phantom raiſed by ſpiritual enchantment, and called after his name; and that indeed is ſo monſtrous, that poor people are to be excuſed if their blood riſes againſt it. O how much more peace would there be in kingdoms, and churches, and neighbourhoods, did they who have the greateſt maſtery over the paſſions, take as much pains to moderate them, as they do to chafe and blow them up! But tho' I have mentioned only Miniſters, yet none of you may think you are unconcerned in the duty of this particular. Indulge not yourſelves in that wicked cuſtom of *ſpeaking evil of others.* It is

[b] Jam. iii. 9, 10.

is much if by ſome way or other they do not hear of it again; and a greater wonder, if, when they hear of it, and are able to revenge themſelves, they ſuffer you to remain in peace, who would not let their good name to do ſo. And when you have a call to ſpeak ungrateful things to them, let the manner be as grateful as you can contrive it; let your admonitions be accompanied with modeſty, and your reproofs with mildneſs; for by this method you will turn off their anger from you to themſelves, and even force them to love the hand which wounds but to heal.

4. [c] *Study to do your own buſineſs*, for that is the way to be *quiet*; but [d] *buſy-bodies in other mens matters muſt* expect to *ſuffer* for it. Mind the duties of your proper ſtation, and leave others to manage their own affairs as they ſee fit. Inquiſitiveneſs is a troubleſome quality. Inſtead of thruſting your ſickle into your neighbour's corn, ſtrive to cultivate and improve yourſelves in things commendable; for *who will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?* Move ſilently along in your own ſphere, ſheding your kind influences upon all within your reach, but not treſpaſſing upon their bounds. Theſe are means which we may and ought to uſe for peace ſake.

[c] 1 Theſſ. iv. 11. [d] 1 Pet. iv. 11.

11. There are other things which we may not do, and for the neglect of which we cannot be juſtly charged as breakers of the peace.

1. To keep fair with a perſon we may not flatter his vices, much leſs copy them. There are thoſe ſo unreaſonable that they will not give quarter upon eaſier terms; but if this be their mind, that they will not be friends with us, unleſs they will be friends to their corruptions, even let them hate us. We dare not purchaſe peace with men by methods that would deſtroy our peace with God. Poſſibly the unlikeneſs of our manners to theirs may be a real trouble to them, and they may take occaſion to quarrel with us for our adherence to the principles of virtue and religion, calling it ſtubbornneſs and obſtinacy; but we are not to think this any way ſtrange, or to be in any degree influenced by it. *Elijah* was in this ſenſe unpeaceable; he could not wink at the idolatries of *Ahab*, nor fall in with the reigning corruptions, but was unfaſhionably good; which made the King, when he met him once, aſk, [e] *Art thou he that troubleth Iſrael?* No, ſaith the Prophet, *I have not troubled Iſrael, but thou and thy father's houſe in that ye have forſaken the commandments of the Lord.* The higheſt quality will not give a ſanction to vice, tho' vice will take away much

[e] 1 Kings xviii. 17, 18.

much of the reſpect and deference that ſhould wait on that. Sin is hateful where-ever it be found; neither ſhould we ſeek to put falſe colours on it to make it look amiable, or rather to render ourſelves acceptable and beloved for doing it. Take *Elihu* for an enſample in this caſe; [f] *Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's perſon; neither let me give flattering titles to man; for I know not to give flattering titles, in ſo doing my Maker would ſoon take me away.*

2. We may not ſacrifice truth to peace, as they would have us do, who, right or wrong, expect we ſhould ſubmit to their impoſitions. We beg leave to examine and try all matters in diſpute, by the unering rule of Scripture; and if leave be not given us, we think we can juſtifiably take it; and that in caſe, after a fair inquiry, we are not ſatisfied to comply with the things impoſed, we are at liberty to reject them; this is all the liberty we claim; and this, we are perſuaded, God and nature meant we ſhould injoy. We know what the Scripture ſaith, that *all that is not of faith is ſin*; and we know that reaſon tells us the ſame thing; for when all is done, it is the light of every man's own mind, and not another's, that muſt guide him in religious affairs. In other matters, we ſometimes pay ſo much regard to another's judgment, as to act by

[f] Job xxxii. 21, 22.

it in oppoſition to our own, becauſe we run no great hazard in it; but where the ſalvation of our ſouls is concerned, and he acts ſureſt who doth his beſt, we muſt exerciſe our utmoſt caution, and make choice of thoſe means that are moſt to our edification; and which they are, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, every one is beſt able to judge for himſelf. The *Peace of the Church* is, I own, a very plauſible topick; it is what honeſt men pray for and purſue, and deſigning men, under a pretence of more than ordinary zeal for it, make a handle of the moſt unchriſtian animoſities, perſecuting men in this world, and damning them in the next, becauſe they will not do all which they have made neceſſary to procure it. Though after all, it is very much to be queſtioned, whether this method, if it were tried, would anſwer; for they in whom paſſion is ſo ſtrong, and reaſon ſo weak, that they cannot bear to have others differ from them, even tho' they ſhould be brought to agree, would hardly want ſomething or other ſtill to put them out of temper. Where the fault is in nature, it is not applying external emollients will effect the cure; to prevent old ſores from breaking out again that muſt be corrected. For my part I cannot conceive how unity of judgment and practice is neceſſary to unity of affection and harmony of life. We ſee that particular Corporations, beſides the Laws

of

of the Realm by which they are governed in common with others, have certain By-Laws amongſt themſelves; neither is this judged inconſiſtent with the peace of the ſtate. * And why ſhould it be thought any more inconſiſtent with the peace of the Church, for particular Churches, retaining uniformity in the eſſential points of Religion, to vary in other things? In the primitive times this mutual forbearance was commonly practiſed, every particular Chuch or Congregation challenging and injoying an inherent power of managing its own affairs. †

Let this conclude the Firſt thing propoſed, or the explication of this Duty, as to its Nature, Objects, and Limitation.

II. I am next to ſhew you, Why we cannot expect the full accompliſhment of our wiſhes and endeavours in this caſe; or whence it becomes a thing impoſſible to *live peaceably with all men.*

I ſhall

* Enquiry into the conſtitution, *&c.* of the Primitive Church.

† Neither is this contradicted by the convening of Synods, ſeeing the Decrees of ſuch Aſſemblies (if obligatory) bound only thoſe Churches whoſe Repreſentatives were preſent at them; and theſe not by any force they had of their own, but by virtue of the agreement they (the Churches) had entered into of being determined by them.

I ſhall be the ſhorter upon this head, becauſe the reaſon of it is ſo apparent; for when inquiry is made into the cauſes of hatred and variance, every one perceives that the luſts and paſſions of men are in fault, becauſe every one muſt be ſenſible by the confuſion they create in his own boſom, that they are the worſt enemies to peace. [g] *Whence come wars and fightings amongſt you? Come they not hence, even from your luſts that war in your members?* So that as long as pride, and covetouſneſs, and revenge, and ſuch-like evil diſpoſitions are in the world, and theſe there will be as long as there are men in it, like ſo many boiſterous winds, they will render it a ſcene of diſtraction, driving men like veſſels on a tempeſtuous ſea one upon another. Pride is never ſatisfied without more ſubmiſſion than it will ever meet with; nor Covetouſneſs without more wealth than can be ſuppoſed to fall to its ſhare; nor Revenge without perpetual retaliations; and being thus inſatiable they will find men work enough to gratify them, which cannot be attempted without runing things into diſorder. But beſides theſe general paſſions, there is a particular ill turn of mind, with which ſome have the unhappineſs to be born, which will neither afford any reſt to themſelves, nor ſuffer any to be at reſt that are about them. Too many in the world are of *Nabal's*

[g] Jam. iv. 1.

bal's character, of whom his ſervants gave this account, that he was ſuch [h] *a ſon of Belial that a man could not ſpeak to him.* We ought in charity to make allowances for this temper, and if we cannot manage it as well as we would, do as well with it as we can.

Ignorance too is many times the occaſion of unpeaceableneſs. The greateſt ſtorms happen uſually in the night. Ignorance is the parent of falſe zeal, and the more ignorant zeal is, the more immoderate. Its true ignorance left to itſelf would be leſs hurtful; but alas, though harmleſs itſelf, it fits men for tools to ſerve the corrupt deſigns of contriving heads, and renders them as terrible, being played by others, as elſe they would be innocent. Schiſm, Rebellion, and a few more ſuch terms of art, thrown amongſt the ignorant multitude, have produced wonderful effects. It is found likewiſe that ignorance runs men into imprudences, which my be well enough meant by them, but draw after them very ſad conſequences.

Theſe are reaſons why no one muſt look for perfect peace in this world.

But the ſincere followers of Chriſt Jeſus have more reaſon than others to expect trouble. *They are not of the world, therefore the world hateth them.* The exemplarineſs of their

[h] 1 Sam. xxv. 17.

their lives reproves the wickedneſs of others, and wakes conſcience in them, ſo that they are ſtrangers to reſt, which makes them by way of revenge procure all the trouble they can, to thoſe who are the occaſion of their inward uneaſineſs. Finally, the Devil is not yet chained up, he is premitted to raiſe ſtorms not in the air only, but in the world and in the church, and having great wrath againſt good men breathes the ſame into his agents, continually urging them on to miſchief, and aſſiſting them in the contriving and effecting it.

III. Although perfect peace is not to be hoped for, yet are we bound to do our utmoſt for the obtaining it. Be perſuaded *as much as lieth in you, to live peaceably with all men.*

1. In conformity to the Goſpel, which by its precepts enjoins it, by its examples recommends it, by its rewards encourages it, and by its principles tends to beget and maintain peace in the hearts, and the ſocieties of men. An unpeaceable chriſtian is a perfect contradiction; his faith is his condemnation, for he profeſſes to believe in God, who is ſtiled *the God of Peace*; in Jeſus Chriſt, who is *the Prince of Peace*, died to make Peace, and is ever mediating it; and in the Holy Spirit, amongſt whoſe fruits

fruits are *peace, long-ſuffering, and gentleneſs.*

2. For the credit of your profeſſion. One of the greateſt and moſt early prejudicices, which the heathen world entertained againſt Chriſtianity, was a falſe notion got amongſt them, that the Chriſtians were an unpeaceable ſort of men. * This miſtake aroſe from their confounding the Chriſtians with the *Jews*, who, as *Suetonius* ignorantly writes, being headed by one Chriſt were continually raiſing tumults and ſeditions; by means of which groſs miſtake, the innocent came to ſhare in the puniſhment of the guilty. You are not now to be informed, that the ſame charge hath been renewed againſt us, and like that againſt the firſt Chriſtians, for want of diſtinguiſhing between us and ſome hot-headed enthuſiaſts, whom we as little countenance as they that are inceſſantly boaſting of their loyalty; I will not give myſelf liberty to ſuppoſe, out of fear that the world would otherwiſe be ignorant of it. My Friends, Let us continue to prove this charge unjuſt, in ſpite of all the arts that our enemies put in practice to ruffle and enſnare us. If called upon at any time let us be ready *to give a reaſon of our* Diſſent, *with meekneſs, having a good conſcience, that whereas they ſpeak evil of us, as of*

* In Vita Claudii.

of evil-doers, they may be aſhamed that falſly accuſe our good converſation in Chriſt. Peaceableneſs with godlineſs and honeſty (and remember, they generally, if not always go together) will prove the beſt ſupport and commendation to our cauſe; as on the other hand, nothing can be a greater prejudice to it than the contrary character.

3. If it were only for your own eaſe and ſatisfaction, you ſhould *ſtudy to be quiet.* For though as the world now ſtands, *the doing all that in you lies,* were it much more than it is, will not be ſufficient for the attainment of the end you aim at, yet queſtionleſs you will have more peace than another ſhall, who doth what in him lies, to live unpeaceably with all men. Let the worſt come, having done your duty, you are ſure of inward complacency, that if men will not ſuffer you to live peaceably, yet conſcience will; and you will have the ſatisfaction to know that whatever oppoſitions you meet with, they are not the effects of your own impatience and folly, but trials deſigned by Providence to exerciſe your virtue, and prepare you for your crown.

The Grounds *of* Anniversary-Days, *both* Festivals *and* Fasts,

Considered in a

SERMON,

Preached

November 5, 1717.

SERMON II.

The Grounds of Anniverſary Days.

EXOD. XII. 14.

And this day ſhall be unto you for a memorial; and you ſhall keep it a feaſt to the Lord, throughout your generations; you ſhall keep it a feaſt by an ordinance for ever.

THE deliverance of the children of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, not only as it was a type of the redemption of mankind by Jeſus Chriſt, but in itſelf conſidered, is extremely remarkable, and to be reckoned among the moſt illuſtrious periods in time, events in hiſtory, and works of Providence; wherein the true God triumphs over the falſe gods of the heathen, executes judgment againſt their idols, and confounds all their worſhipers; the divine power is glorioufly

diſplayed in a variety of extraordinary and miraculous operations, the divine juſtice ſignalized upon a hardened tyrant and the profeſſed enemies of his people; the truth and faithfulneſs of God cleared in the exact accompliſhment of his promiſes; and, finally, his tender and watchful care of the church, manifeſted in appearing ſo ſeaſonably and ſo wonderfully for thoſe to whom it was at that time confined. A train of miracles prepared the way to this deliverance, and a ſucceſſion of them followed it. Men may obſtinately, and for a long while together, fight againſt God, and harden themſelves under his judgment; and God, to ſhew the power of his patience, may indure with much long-ſuffering thoſe veſſels of wrath before he gives the deciſive blow, but will at laſt overcome. The impious *Pharaoh* will be an example of this to all ages. Againſt nine plagues did this wretch bid defiance; ſo difficult is the conqueſt of an obdurate heart: the tenth and laſt makes him ſubmit, for all the firſt-born in *Egypt* die in one night; the Lord puting a difference in this, as he had done in the former plagues, between the *Iſraelites* and the *Egyptians*. A great and ſore cry is every where heard, and in this fright both *Pharaoh* and his ſubjects are urgent for the departure of thoſe, who till then, could not obtain a permiſſion to go, concluding themſelves

ſelves to be all but dead men. On the day preceeding their departure, (as the night before he ſuffered our Lord inſtituted the great goſpel feaſt of the Supper) the Paſſover is appointed, as a ſtanding memorial of God's paſſing over the houſes of the *Iſraelites*, from whence the Feſtival takes its name, and by ſtrength of hand bringing them out of the houſe of bondage. *And this day ſhall be unto you for a memorial; and you ſhall keep it a feaſt unto the Lord, throughout your generations; you ſhall keep it a feaſt by an ordinance for ever.* The Obſervation which, from theſe words, I ſhall make the ground of the following diſcourſe is this.

God juſtly expects that the great and ſignal deliverances which, in his Providence he brings about for his people, ſhould be had in everlaſting remembrance.

In the handling of which doctrine I propoſe theſe ſeveral things.

I. To inquire into the reaſons of it; or why God would have theſe glorious works of his Providence to be remembered.

II. To prove it highly agreeable to Reaſon, and not contrary to the Word of God, for Publick Days to be ſet apart by authority for memorials of ſuch deliverances; and in imitation of that

the text refers to, to be made Anniverſary and Perpetual.

III. To conſider the difference which, in this reſpect, there is between Feſtivals and Faſts; and the foundations of this difference.

And then laſtly, to bring down all to the memorable occaſion of this day.

I. I ſhall inquire into the reaſons of the point; or why it is God expects that great and ſignal deliverances, thoſe glorious works of his Providence, ſhould be ever remembered. I ſhall only name ſome of the principal reaſons.

1. Theſe works belong to the hiſtory of Providence, which God would have to be known and read of all men. They are indeed ſome of his chief beauties, its maſterſtrokes, which moſt evidently diſcover the finger of God. The book of Providence is the nobleſt, the largeſt, and moſt inſtructive in the world, comprehending in it whatſoever is true and obſerveable in all other hiſtories: for all theſe human compoſitions, with what view ſoever they were drawn up by ſeveral authors, as far forth as they purſue the truth, are nothing but a hiſtory of God's dealings with mankind from age to age; and when the whole volume ſhall be laid open to us, when we ſhall ſee the whole thread

thread of events from begining to end, and ſhall read it all by the clear light of the upper world, we ſhall find every page to be full of meaning, and cry out, with aſtoniſhment, O the depth of the wiſdom, and knowledge of God! This will be the happineſs of all the ſaints, at the cloſing up of the ſcene, among whom we ſhall have a place, if we follow the faith of thoſe gone before us. In the mean while, let us gather up what we can (for the very fragments here are precious) and hide it deep in our memories, whether it be what hath fallen under our own obſervation or hath been delivered down to us from our forefathers, who have told us the things God did in their days; by which means we ſhall be the better able to underſtand the conduct of Providence, and to unfold its difficulties, comparing the experiences of paſt ages with the events of the preſent time. [a] *Inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyſelf to the ſearch of their fathers; for we are but of yeſterday, and know nothing, becauſe our days upon earth are a ſhadow. Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?* We are not placed high enough, neither do we live long enough to be competent judges of Providence, and ſhould therefore take in all the helps we can get, runing back to times far

[a] Job viii. 8, 9, 10.

gone, thoſe eſpecially which we have recorded in ſacred ſcripture, and from all together framing the beſt conceptions of the Perfections and Providence of God that we are able. We find it complained of more than once,[b] that men regarded not the work of the Lord, nor conſidered the operation of his hands, and to this is attributed the miſery and deſtruction brought upon them. And next to a ſtupid regardleſneſs of the works of God, is lightly forgeting them. [c] *They forgat his works and his wonders that he ſhewed them.* It is an high affront and indignity offered to the great God, as if his management of the affairs of the world was not worth our notice, when we attend not to the ſteps of his Providence, nor often aſk, what hath God wrought?

11. The memory of God's works of fame is of excellent uſe for the preſervation of religion in the world, both in its belief, and practice.

1. Religion, as it reſpects the faith of a ſupreme Being, his government of the world, and regard to the different actions of men, of which he approves ſome and puniſhes others, is hereby very much ſupported. Religion and irreligion, tho' direct contraries, may be yet ſaid to be both of them natural to mankind. The great principles of religion having been ſtamped on the ſoul by the

[b] Pſal. xxviii. 5. Iſai. v. 12, 13. · [c] Pſal. lxxviii. 11.

the hand of God in its firſt creation, can never be intirely razed out. But then, thro' the darkneſs of human underſtanding, and great corruption of the heart, there is ſince the apoſtacy a general inclination in men to ſlide into infidelity. And were it not for thoſe leſs common appearances of God's Providence in the ſeveral ages and nations of the world, by which he awakens mankind to conſider that there is one who rules among them, tho' inviſible, it is to be feared theſe ſeeds of religion would in length of time be buried, and lie dead and uſeleſs in the mind. At certain times therefore God breaks forth in extraordinary works of Providence, and is known by the glory that ſurrounds him. And then men can ſay, [d] *Verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.* And to the ſame ſenſe may be applied that of the wiſe man, [e] *I know that whatſoever God doth it ſhall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it; and God does it that men ſhould fear before him.*

2. Religion, as it regards practice, is equally indebted to the memory of God's providential works. For whom men believe and fear, they will have ſome care to pleaſe in their behaviour; ſo that the fear inſpired by the aweful manifeſtations of the divine juſtice and power, contributes not a little

[d] Pſal. lviii. 11. [e] Eccleſ. iii. 14.

to the reſtraint of that torrent of violence and wickedneſs which would otherwiſe go nigh to overflow the world. And beſides this, there is ſomewhat of gratitude left in human nature (tho' God knows it is but little) which leads us to think ourſelves under obligation to that God, who watches over our lives and liberties, and by his Providence does, at times, ſo viſible interpoſe to ſave them. For which reaſon, the Ten Commandments are uſhered in with this preface, [f] *I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the houſe of bondage. Thou ſhalt have no other Gods before me*, &c. There is a ſecret conviction in every one's breaſt, that obedience is due for protection, and ſervice for deliverance. Is it not reaſonable that the ſame God who guards me, ſhould rule me? And he who redeems me from ſlavery, ſhould have my chearful, voluntary ſervice? It is upon this ground that the remembrance of God's works, and the obſervation of his commands are joined together by the Pſalmiſt. [g] *He eſtabliſhed a teſtimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Iſrael, which he commanded our fathers, that they ſhould make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children that ſhould be born; who ſhould ariſe and declare them to their*

[f] Exod. xx. 2. [g] Pſal. lxxviii. 5, &c.

their children; that they might not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.

111. God expects the great works of his Providence ſhould be had in perpetual remembrance, becauſe they carry in them the accompliſhment of his promiſes. [h] *With his hand he fulfils that which he ſpake by his mouth.* And therefore *Joſhua* is bold to appeal to the people of *Iſrael* in a meeting of all their tribes, [i] *Ye know in all your hearts, and in all your ſouls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things, which the Lord your God ſpake concerning you; all are come to paſs, and not one thing hath failed you.* God hath promiſed *to build his church on a rock,—that he will be with it to the end of the world,—and that the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it;—that he will be nigh to them who call upon him,—and none who put their truſt in him ſhall be deſolate.* Now when we ſee the people of God ſurrounded with enemies, and near to being ſwallowed up, and God eminently appears in anſwer to their prayers, ſnatching them as a prey out of the mouth of the lion; when we ſee the true religion involved in the moſt threatening dangers, and ready at once to be oppreſſed and extinguiſhed, and by a hand from heaven, reſcued from the deſtruction plotted againſt it, muſt we not praiſe the Lord for his truth, and ſay, *That he remembereth*

[h] 2 Chron. vi. 4. [i] Joſ. xxiii. 14.

bereth his covenant for ever? This is the improvement the pious Pſalmiſt makes of God's wonderful works. [k] *The works of the Lord are great, ſought out of all them that have pleaſure therein. His work is honourable and glorious, and his righteouſneſs endureth for ever. —He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered.—He will ever be mindful of his covenant.—The works of his hand are verity and judgment; all his commandments are ſure, they ſtand faſt for ever, and are done in truth and uprightneſs.* God may ſeem ſlack concerning his promiſe, as men count ſlackneſs, but he never forgets it; the ſucceſſive ages of the world ſupplying manifeſt confirmation of it, and comments upon it.

IV. The examples recorded in hiſtory of God's providential care over the church are of great uſe for the ſupport of ſuch as fear him at all times. [l] *The generation to come ſhall know them, even the children which ſhall be born, who ſhall ariſe and declare them to their children, that they may ſet their hope in God*; as we have it in the Pſalm I had occaſion to quote once before. Certainly that Providence may ſafely be relied on which hath ſo often proved itſelf to the conviction of the moſt blinded and prejudiced part of mankind. [m] *He that hath delivered, and doth deliver, can ſtill deliver.* Difficulties only ſerve to ſet off the glory of God's works, and

[k] Pſal. cxi. 2, &c. [l] lxxviii. 6, 7. [m] 2 Cor. i. 10.

and to diſtinguiſh them from all others. If we may ſpeak after the manner of men, God loves to appear in times of diſtreſs, and in caſes that deſpair of any other help than his. *Nodus vindice dignus.* The difficulty requires and demonſtrates an almighty ſuccour. Think of the wonders that former ages have ſeen; think on thoſe to which you, yourſelves, have been eye-witneſſes; after this can you diſtruſt, or fear or faint? The ſame power, the ſame omniſcience, the ſame goodneſs, are ſtill in being, and continue without decay. *They that know thy name*, that is, the fame thou haſt gotten in the earth by thy mighty works, and particularly the great things thou haſt wrought for thy church, *will put their truſt in thee*; *for thou Lord haſt not forſaken them that ſeek thee.* And in another place, [n] *We have heard with our ears, O God*; *our Fathers have told us what work thou didſt in their days, in times of old.* [o] *In God we boaſt all the day long, and praiſe thy name for ever.* After the ſame manner *Solomon* concludes his prayer to the God of *Iſrael*, at the dedication of the temple, making uſe of this incourageing plea, that he was the God that had brought their fathers out of *Egypt*. And when he afterwards comes to bleſs the congregation, he gratefully acknowledges that there had not failed one word of all that God had promiſed by *Moſes* his ſervant; and

[n] Pſal. ix. 10. [o] xliv. 1, &c.

and then adds this benedictory wish, [p] *The Lord our God be with us as he was with our fathers.* By keeping the works of God in remembrance, as he hath the glory of them, so we have the benefit and advantage of drawing from them arguments of continual trust and dependence.

II. I shall now prove it to be highly agreeable to Reason, and not contrary to the Word of God, for Publick Days to be set apart by authority for memorials of signal deliverances; and in imitation of that which the Text refers to, to be made Anniversary and Perpetual. And here, I would only insist upon these two considerations.

1. This is the most probable, not to say the only way of prepetuating the general knowledge and remembrance of such deliverances. For when they are suffered to mix with the common events of time, and have no other conveyance but history, if the memory of them does not quite wear out, yet it is but a few to whom the knowledge of them can be supposed to come, because but few, in comparison, trouble themselves to look into the account of antient times. The present scene, and their own private affairs take up the attention and thoughts of the greater part of mankind, who are so far from an inquisitive search after old events,

[p] 1 Kings viii. 53, &c.

events, that they are many times ignorant of the occurrences of the age they live in. Such days therefore are with good reaſon ſat up as *Pillars of Remembrance*, and in the revolution of the year are of uſe to revive and eſtabliſh the memory of God's marvellous works. For when it ſhall be aſked, as it was ſuppoſed the children would do concerning the celebration of the Paſſover,—What is this? On what account came this day to be annually obſerved? To which their anſwer was to be, [q] *By ſtrength of hand the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the houſe of bondage*; ſo we may ſay, that God hath done great things for us, particularly ſuch and ſuch, to preſerve which admirable events from oblivion, and that what God hath wrought in one age, might be known and extoled by all, this day was ſettled. The end of ſuch feaſts is therefore ſaid to be for a *Memorial* or *Monument*, which intimates that unleſs ſome ſuch method was taken, the knowledge of the moſt memorable works of Providence, in the current of time would ſink, and be quite loſt as to a great part of the world.

2. By the inſtitution of ſuch days the magiſtrate gives glory to God, confeſing deliverance and ſafety to come from the ſame hand which at firſt confered on him his power and authority. For as the powers that

[q] Exod. xiii. 14.

that be are ordained of God, ſo God alone giveth ſalvation to kings. Such Feſtivals are a publick acknowledgement of a divine overruling Providence, a ſolemn declaration of it to the whole world, and a ſtanding atteſtation or witneſs to this great truth, tranſmitted down from generation to generation. For national benefits God ought to have national honour and devotion; and it is very much for the credit of religion, and tends to keep alive the publick ſenſe of it when a whole people join in commorating a deliverance to which they owe their preſervation from the moſt terrible evils, and the quiet enjoyment of their rights, liberties, laws, religion, and all they hold dear and valuable in the world. And as from theſe two conſiderations it appears to be highly agreeable to Reaſon, for days of memorial to be fixed by a proper authority, ſo there is nothing from the Word of God to be objected againſt this practice: on the contrary, we find God himſelf as king and lawgiver of the *Jewiſh* nation appointed a Yearly Day of Joy and Thankſgiving for their deliverance out of ſlavery. And why earthly magiſtrates may not do, on parallel occaſions, what was done under that theocracy, when the ſcripture hath no where laid in the leaſt caution againſt it, I cannot conceive any good reaſon. But then, as I ſaid, it muſt be upon parallel occaſions, and with ſuch limitations as the na-

nature of the thing makes neceſſary. It ought to be for national deliverances that ſuch Anniverſary Days are appointed—for deliverances that are important and uncommon,—and laſtly, they ought not to be multiplied.

1. The deliverance ſhould be national to juſtify the ſeparation of a day from the reſt of the year in memory of it. Should a nation be unhappily divided into parties, and one of them, chiefly as a party, prevail over the other, this advantage, which it might be apt to conſtrue as a declaration of Providence in its behalf, would not warrant the adding a newholiday to the calender; under the cover of which they might inſult all whoſe opinions are not exactly conformable to theirs, and foment a ſpirit of ſtrife and contention, the moſt fatal thing that can be to the peace and welfare of a kingdom. Whether, for ſome of thoſe reaſons, *a certain day*, very much in requeſt among ſome people, might not conveniently be laid aſide, I ſhall leave thoſe to judge whom it moſt concerns. The reſtriction manifeſtly cuts off a great many other days, as thoſe dedicated to the honour of particular ſaints, which, perhaps, were better reſtored to the romiſh church, having not the leaſt foundation in ſcripture examples, nor relation to us as a nation. To which ſhall I add, that they are more ſuitably matched with the doctrine of that church con-

concerning the merit of ſaints, and her ſuperſtitious cuſtom of invocating them; whereas, *in a reformed church*, they are at beſt but like an old piece upon a new garment, or if you will, like a new upon an old, which for certain is no part of its beauty? Likewiſe, all ſuch days as are kept in memory of the birth of Chriſt, his death, and reſurrection, the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, *&c.* for all which, if the Lord's Day, in its weekly return, was not a ſufficient memorial God himſelf, no doubt, would have ſanctified other days as he hath done that; the not doing of which is a clear intimation of his will in this caſe. For the memory of mercies which regard not one nation more than another, but all mankind alike, and are of a nature purely ſpiritual, God hath taken care to provide as far as he ſaw fiting; and for men to intermeddle in this matter with their ſuppliments is a tacit accuſation of the divine inſtitutions as defective, and inſufficient to anſwer their end.

2. Such Anniverſary Thankſgivings ought not to be appointed but for important and uncommon deliverances. Such was the coming of the *Iſraelites* out of *Egypt*, where the whole church of God, at that time, had groaned under a long and miſerable ſervitude. Such was the turn upon the dreadful maſſacre intended againſt the people of the

the *Jews* by *Haman*, which gave riſe to the Feaſt of *Purim*,[r] ordain'd to be kept, for the ſpace of two days yearly, throughout all their generations. And little leſs remarkable were the Deliverances of this Day—the ſaving a Nation from ruin, preventing that which is worſe than death itſelf, to an ingenuous mind (every one will gueſs that I mean Slavery) or reſtoring that liberty without which life itſelf is not valuable—this certainly challenges a never-dying remembrance, and is ſo unſpeakable a mercy, that the reflection upon it is enough to warm the heart to ſentiments of praiſe and gratitude as often as the Day comes round; even to times the moſt diſtant from that in which the Deliverance was wrought. *Civil Freedom* is our great happineſs as we are men, and joined in ſociety for the more ſafe and comfortable paſſing of this life; and *Freedom of Religion* is our privilege as we are chriſtians, and deſigned for an after ſtate; and both of that price, that the Providence whereby they are ſecured ought never to be forgoten.

3. I beg leave to think this another neceſſary limitation, that ſuch Days ought not to be multiplied. For as they are not needful, ſeeing on *one* ſuch Day we may comprize in our thoughts and thankſgivings the mercies of many others, ſo I would further aſk, whether the great number of them

[r] Eſth. ix. 26, &c.

would not have a tendency to render them leſs ſolemn, to corrupt the poor of the land by introducing idleneſs and exceſs, and by degrees, to make men leſs ſtrict in the obſervation of the *Sabbath* itſelf. On all theſe accounts *Mens Days* ought to be very few, what name ſoever they paſs under; and no unprejudiced perſon will think the Romiſh Church to be defended, where, (not to diſpute the authority that hath given a ſanction to ſuch Days; not to obſerve that ſome of them carry the names of perſons that never were in the world, or are damned ſpirits in hell, and are all of too particular a nature to be kept after ſo publick and ſolemn a manner) the multitude of them alone is ſufficient objection againſt them; the poor labourer having a great part of that time devoured by them, which God hath allowed him for work: and as if the Year was not already enough crouded with ſuch days, they are continually canonizing new ſaints, and may go on doing ſo to the end of the world, if they had but as many Days in the Year as they are furniſhed with pretended Saints, which as ſome have counted them, are in ſuch number, that tho' there were as many Holidays as there are minutes in our Year, the Year would not afford a feaſt for each Saint. How far a certain Proteſtant Church from which we diſſent is concerned in the con-

conſequence of this particular, let the impartial judge.

III. The laſt thing propoſed is to conſider the difference which in this reſpect there is between Feſtivals and Faſts, and the foundation of this difference. The appointment of Days of Thankſgiving to be Yearly obſerved in remembrance of very great and extenſive Deliverances hath been ſhewn to be not only lawful, but under certain limitations highly uſeful; but now, on the contrary, for the obſervation of Annual Faſts in memory of *ſome ſin committed*, it ſeems to have no countenance either from Scripture or Reaſon. The thing is utterly deſtitute of Scripture precedents. We have Feaſts of divine inſtitution, but no Faſts of this nature. Take notice that I ſay, none *divinely* appointed, perpetual, nor in memory of any one particular fact. It cannot be pretended, as the reaſon why no ſuch Faſts are to be met with, that there was no occaſion given for them, for only to mention ſome of the provocations in the wilderneſs, cited by the Apoſtle *Paul*[f] as examples for the admonition of thoſe on whom the ends of the world were come; were not the people guilty of Idolatry in making and worſhiping the Golden Calf, which, as it was the leading ſin of that kind, ſo was one of the greateſt too, all circumſtances conſidered,

[f] 1 Cor. x. 7, &c.

that ſtands marked in ſacred hiſtory? Did they not commit whoredom with the daughters of *Moab*, mingling in the ſacrifices of their Gods? Did they not tempt God in the deſart, and in the height of their mutiny talk of ſtoning thoſe whom he had ſet over them for their conductors? Theſe were not the ſins of a *few* perſons only, but of the *body* of the people; they were highly provoking to God, and puniſhed by him in the moſt terrible manner, by the immediate deſtruction of great numbers, and the excluſion of all that generation, with the exception of two that were of a better ſpirit, from the Land of Promiſe. So that if ever ſins called for a publick Yearly Faſt theſe did; and, if ever ſuch Faſts were of ſervice, theſe were likely to have been ſo, as warnings againſt ſymbolizing with neighbouring nations in their idolatrous worſhip, intermarrying with them, and rebelling againſt the meſſengers of God; which were all of them ſins extremely agreeable to the temper of that people; and yet God ſaw not fit to command Faſts on theſe occaſions; which, I take it, affords a fair and concluſive argument againſt any ſuch Days; for as much as *the fooliſhneſs of God*, to uſe the words of the Apoſtle, that which too often is ſo accounted, *is wiſer than men.*

The general inſtruction to be drawn from hence is, that ſins once repented of, are intirely forgiven;

forgiven; and in the ſcripture ſenſe, *forgoten* too; that is, ſo far, as that God will not upbraid men with former miſcarriages, which ſhall not once be mentioned unto them. And though to keep him humble, and poſſeſs him with a lively ſenſe of pardoning mercy, it be very proper for the penitent to make a particular and frequent confeſſion of ſome ſins which he hath ground to believe are forgiven, yet in his confeſſion to proceed always on the ſuppoſition of their being unpardoned; and to alarm, terrify and afflict himſelf, after the ſame manner as when they were firſt committed, cannot be his duty: whereas mercies are of a more conſtant obligation, and ought accordingly to be conſecrated to perpetuity, both to inſpire us with gratitude, and to incourge future truſt in the Providence of God. The debts contracted by ſin may be all forgiven and croſſed, but gratitude is a debt we ſhould be always paying, becauſe it will be always due.

But the chief foundation of the difference between Annual Feaſts and Faſts is this, that the guilt of the ſame individual ſin does not deſcend from one generation to another, as the influence of a mercy may do. The Jews, in a like caſe, are reproved for uſing this Proverb, *That the Fathers had eaten ſower grapes, and the Childrens teeth were ſet on edge*; charging the calamities that befell them on

the ſcore of their Progenitors; which was ſo far from being true, that let the Father have been never ſo vile and wicked, if he hath a Son that ſeeth his Father's ſins which he hath done, and conſiders, and doth not the like, he ſhall not die for the iniquity of his Father, he ſhall ſurely live; it being a ſtanding Rule of God's Proceedings in ſuch caſes, *the ſoul that ſineth, it ſhall die*; as you have the matter ſtated at large in the xviii*th* Chapter of *Ezekiel.* Indeed, if men act over their Father's ſins, and receive not inſtruction from the dealings of Providence with thoſe that lived in former ages, God may puniſh the ſame degree of corruption more ſeverely in them than he did in their Forefathers, becauſe of the incorrigibleneſs which they add to their other ſins, and a ſtupid diſregard of providential warnings: but ſtill, ſpeaking properly, the guilt of ſin is incommunicable, and dies with the guilty perſons; ſo as that it can never be the duty of their Succeſſors to repent of their ſins, as of their own; to accuſe themſelves in the ſight of God of things done before they were born, or to take a load upon their ſhoulders which does not belong to them; when, God knows, they have ſins enough of their own to mourn for, without adopting the ſins of paſt generations to make up the number. The caſe is ſo very different in reſpect of mercies, that one and the ſame deliverance

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may be a mercy not to one age only, but to all the generations to follow to the end of the world; herein like a ſtream which if not intercepted will flow on endleſsly. Upon the whole then, there is a manifeſt difference between Yearly Feſtivals and Faſts in memory of particular Sins or Deliverances; the former have their foundation in Reaſon and Scripture, the latter not.

The *Day of Attonement* [t] was, I confeſs, a Perpetual Faſt, on which the *Iſraelites* were cammanded to afflict their Souls; but then no particular Sin is mentioned for which Expiation was to be made more than for any other, and which in the return of that ſeaſon was to be confeſſed and bewailed by all Poſterity. It was plainly no other than an Annual Luſtration for the cleanſing the children of *Iſrael* once a Year from all their ſins by a common ſacrifice. I am not afraid to take notice alſo, that we read of the [u] *Faſt of the fourth Month, of the fifth, of the ſeventh, and of the tenth*; in all *four* Faſts in the Year; but in reply to this, I have two or three obſervations to make, which, if I am not deceived, will ſhew thoſe inſtances are nothing to the preſent purpoſe.

1. It doth not appear that theſe Faſts were inſtituted, or ſo much as approved by God; the contrary to which is more proba-

[t] Lev. xxiii. 27. [u] Zech. viii. 19.

ble from the queſtion that is aſked, [w] *When ye faſted, and mourned in the fifth and ſeventh month* (and the ſame may be applied to the other two) *even theſe ſeventy years, did ye at all faſt unto me, even unto me?* By which interpreters agree to be in part meant (and I conceive principally,) that it was not in obedience to any injunction of God, but of their own heads that they had kept theſe Days. And that which ſtrengthens this meaning is, that in the 7th verſe, they are bid to hear the words, *which the Lord had cried by the former Prophets, when Jeruſalem was inhabited, and in proſperity*; i. e. to obſerve the commandments of God inculcated upon them by the former Prophets, in doing whereof they would moſt infallibly ſecure his favour, and need not be ſollicitous about Days of human invention.

2. Of theſe Faſts one was in memory of the ſiege of *Jeruſalem* by [x] *Nebuchadnezzar*, another of the taking of the City, another of the deſtruction of the Temple, and the laſt (as to appointment, not in the order of the months) of the murther of *Gedaliah*, whom the King of *Babylon* had made governour of the land, with the poor remainders of the *Jews* that repaired to him, which ſeemed to give the finiſhing ſtroke to their miſeries. So that three of theſe Faſts could be only deſigned to

[w] Zech. vii. 5. [x] 2 Kings xxv. 1. Jer. xxxix. 2. 2 Kings xxv. 9. Jer. xli. 1, 2.

to bewail their calamities, and the general corruption which occaſioned them, not any ſingle crimes commited upon theſe Days. And as for the murther of *Gedaliah*, they were ſo few concerned in it, that we cannot ſuppoſe the end of ſeting a-part a Day was to humble themſelves for it as their ſin, but as it filled up the meaſure of their own puniſhment.

3. Theſe Faſts were ſet on foot by the *Jews* in the time of their Captivity, while the City and Temple lay in Ruins, their Country deſolate, and they themſelves lived as exiles in a ſtrange land, and were to laſt no longer than till their return to their former proſperous and happy ſtate: after which it was promiſed, they ſhould be to the houſe of [y] *Judah Joy and Gladneſs and Chearful Feaſts*; the *three* Solemnities at which all the males were obliged to appear; and which had been ſuſpended during the ſad interval of the Captivity, ſwallowing up the remembrance of paſt ſorrows. And how any parallel can be drawn between ſuch Faſts, and one that ſhall be ſuppoſed not to commence but from the time that the judgments bewailed have their period, and is continued to the moſt flouriſhing times, and never obſerved with greater appearing zeal, than when the nation is at the height of its glory; I muſt leave thoſe to tell us, who are good at

[y] Zech. viii. 19.

at reconciling contradictions; such as persecuting men out of pure charity and good nature, challenging that Infallibility in Fact, which they disclaim in Principle, and takeing solemn and repeated Oaths to a government, which, not content barely to undermine, they openly traduce and oppose.

Lastly—Permit me now to bring down all to the memorable occasion of this Day. I have said too much on the former part of my discourse to be so large as I intended upon this. It is now more than a Hundred Years since that a Conspiracy was laid, the blackest and most barbarous that ever entered into the heart of man, to have been executed as upon this Day.—*Scelus incredibile & inauditum*,—a wickedness unheard of till then; incredible now, were it not vouched by the best authorities, and which, it is to be hoped, will have no parallel in all the annals of succeeding time.

This hellish Plot was discovered, *not without a miracle of Providence*, saith a Cardinal of their own; to signalize which, and to possess the People of these Lands with a due abhorrence of that Religion, which sanctifies such villanous methods of promoting it, this Day was by Authority recommend to the notice of future ages; and in keeping it none have joined with greater heartiness than the Non-Conformists have always done; and this at the same time that they have paid

paid but little regard to ſome other Anniverſary Days. And we are free to have our conduct in this matter examined, perſuaded that to equal judges it will admit of an eaſy vindication.

Seting aſide the Feaſts and Faſts of the Chuch, concerning which I have given you ſome hints on the Second Head, there are *Three* which may be called *State Days*, *viz.* the 30th of *January*, the 29th of *May*, and the 5th of *November*. As to the firſt—Let the Fact of that Day deſerve all the load that is laid upon it, and more, if that be poſſible, yet ſeeing it cannot be reckoned a *National Sin*, and the perſons concerned have long ſince anſwered for it to God; ſeeing it hath ſerved for little more than the *Shibboleth* of a party, the word of battel, a ſubject for young declaimers to whet their wits upon, and an opportunity (may I not ſay) to mock God, and to rail on their Fellow Subjects; on all theſe accounts, I ſay, it is our opinion, the nation would ſuffer nothing if that pretended Faſt were no more heard of.

In bar to the 29th of *May* we have this to obſerve, that if it ſaw the Reſtoration of a King (whoſe perſonal character I meddle not with) it ſaw vice and profaneſs reſtored with him; it made way for the ejectment of more than *Two Thouſand Miniſters*, who, in the confeſſion of their adverſaries, had no greater fault than their Nonconformity; and for a Popiſh Reign, which, had not

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God in mercy ſtoped its career, would have driven over the neck of our liberties. We muſt be pardoned therefore if we judge ſuch a Day as this not to merit the honour of being diſtinguiſhed from other common Days. But now againſt the Fifth of *November* there lie no ſuch exceptions. It is a Day to be much obſerved unto the Lord, for preventing a deſign, the ſucceſs whereof, humanly ſpeaking, would have bid fair to entail *Popery* upon us to all generations. And having mentioned that one word, I need add no more; for whoever wants a ſingle term to expreſs the greateſt miſeries that can befall the world, may ſeek long enough before he find one ſo full and ſignificant as this Popery—that contradiction to common ſenſe—that foe to reaſon—that reproach to religion—that ſucker to the wealth of a nation—and deſtroyer of the rights of mankind—and open apoſtaſy from the truth and ſimplicity of the Goſpel—a notorious uſurpation on the royalty of Chriſt—and the moſt cruel and bloody tyranny that was ever known, next to that of *Abaddon* himſelf, if it be proper to diſtinguiſh them. Chriſt ſhed his blood for mankind, he laid down his life for his ſheep; how unlike his pretended Vicar, who is better reſembled by the *Thief*, that cometh not but to ſteal, and to kill, and to deſtroy; that univerſal butcher, who, to ſee his empire, like an eaſtern monarch, ſacrifices all that

that can give him any diſturbance. Chriſtianity was planted, grew, and ſubſiſted by the blood of its own Martyrs; Popery by Martyring all that would not renounce their Five Senſes, and conſent to the puting out of their eyes, that they might be the better able to follow their guides; this by Perſecuting, that by ſuffering Perſecution. From this abſurd, this bloody, this dangerous religion, hath God often ſaved us; twice, as upon this Day, by the diſcovery of the Gunpowder Treaſon firſt, and ſince that by the landing of the Prince of *Orange*, afterwards King *William*—A name that will ever be precious to all who in Religion are Proteſtants, and in the State Lovers of Liberty and King *George*. Thus hath God made his wonderful works to be remembred by repeating them; and certainly we are very juſtifiable in having a peculiar value for that Day which God himſelf hath delighted to honour.

CONSIDERATIONS
ON
Time and Eternity,
Adapted to the
NEW YEAR,
IN A
SERMON
PREACHED TO A
SOCIETY of Young Men,
1719.

SERMON III.

Conſiderations on Time and Eternity.

PSALM XC. 4.

For a thouſand years in thy ſight are but as yeſterday when it is paſt, and as a watch in the night.

THOUGH meditations on Time and Eternity can never be unſeaſonable to creatures that have ſo near a concern in both, as we mortals have who are paſſing through one into the other, yet there are certain occaſions when reflections of this nature are peculiarly proper, ſome additional circumſtance concuring to render them more uſeful and affecting. I take the preſent to be ſuch a ſeaſon. We have ſeen the funeral of one year more, and the begining of another; this is a fit ſtage to reſt our thoughts a little, to conſider how much of our race

is run, and of our work diſpatched; to look back on the way that is paſt, and forward on that which remains; and to think how we may direct it ſo as to redeem the Time we have loſt, and get ſafe to our journey's end.

The Title of this Pſalm will inſtruct us in the Author of it, it is ſtiled *a Prayer of Moſes the man of God*; occaſioned, as it is thought, by God's diſpleaſure againſt the *Iſraelites* for their provocations in the wilderneſs, and particularly their murmurings at the relation which the ſpies brought them of the good land; which ſin of theirs ſo highly offended God, that notwithſtanding, at the interceſſion of *Moſes*, he pardoned their iniquity at that time, he yet ſwore *they ſhould never enter into his reſt*; but their carcaſſes ſhould fall in the wilderneſs, even all that were numbered of them, for twenty years old and upwards, who had murmured againſt him. This decree, reducing the lives of that generation to *ſeventy* or *eighty* years, which from that time was to be reckoned the ordinary ſtandard of human life, leads this good man to meditate, on the one hand concerning the Eternity of God, and his watchful Providence over his Church in the ſucceſſive ages of the world, *ver.* 1, and 2; and on the other, concerning man's Mortality, *ver.* 3. and both which in the text he joins in one and the ſame view, that he might the

the more illuſtrate them by a compariſon. *For a thouſand years in thy ſight*, &c. He puts the caſe of *a thouſand years*, becauſe immediately after the fall the years of man's life did not come very much ſhort of this number. The length of this term he compares to that of *yeſterday*, as it appears to us, becauſe *a day* bears but little proportion to *a thouſand years*; but chiefly becauſe Time ſeems to us much ſhorter when it is paſt, than when it is to come, almoſt as nothing. Another ſimilitude, and which, perhaps expreſſes the ſame thing in a more lively manner, is that of *a watch in the night*. The antient *Jews* divided their night into three watches, (ſay ſome) conſiſting each of four hours; the evening watch, that which was ſtrictly called the night watch, and the morning watch. According to others, into four watches containing three hours each. Now what are three or four hours ſpent in ſleep? The Time when we begin to ſleep, and the Time when we wake out of ſleep are, as to us, immediately connected, and the ſpace between, that is conſumed in ſleep, how conſiderable ſoever it may be in itſelf, in our eſtimation goes for nothing: ſuch, and no more, are *a thouſand years* in the the ſight of God.

I. The ſame proportion of Time as it is paſt, appears much ſhorter than when it is to come.

II. In the ſight of God the longeſt term of years is as nothing.

I. The ſame portion of Time as it is paſt appears much ſhorter than when it is to come. Time in itſelf is the ſame, but not in our view. To morrow will conſiſt of the very ſame number of hours and minutes as yeſterday; and yet, becauſe it is to morrow, is ſeemingly of a much greater length; the eye of the mind contracts the one, while it inlarges the other. We have lived in the world twenty, or thirty years, ſome of us more, let me appeal to you, at the ſame time that I ſpeak for myſelf, whether your life hath not been *like a tale that is told?* Time hath ſtolen away ſo inſenſibly, that we can hardly believe ſo much of it hath run out while the tale hath been telling. Whether you have not been like them that dream, ſcarce to be perſuaded that you have dreamed ſo much Time? And whether one year to come makes not a greater appearance in your thoughts, I will not ſay than two or three years, but, than all the years that are paſt? What ſhould cauſe this difference? I ſhall aſſign a few of the

the plaineſt reaſons, and then ſee the uſe this obſervation may be applied to.

1. We are more accuſtomed to look forward than backward; like travellers that are contiually preſſing on, and have a great deal of way before them, but regard not what they have gone over. We conſider Time paſt as loſt and periſhed, and ſo as nothing to us; we overlook it, and have no pleaſure to fix our eye upon it. And this, perhaps, is one reaſon why the Time paſt appears ſo much ſhorter, and Time to come ſo much longer than it is; we care not to reflect on the former, we love not to imploy our thoughts about it, we reckon it to be utterly deſtroyed and ſwallowed up in the gulph of Time; whereas, on the other hand, we trouble ourſelves about Futurity more than we ſhould do, it is perpetually runing in our heads, we often forget the preſent to think of it, and are full of care and anxiety concerning it. The cauſe of our diſregard for the paſt, why we think of it ſo ſeldom, and with ſo little application is, that we are enemies to the duties of ſelf-examination and repentance. We know within ourſelves that our paſt lives will not bear a ſcrutiny, that ſhould we pry into them with any exactneſs, and carefully look over our actions, we ſhould find abundant matter of humiliation and ſelf-abaſement; we therefore turn our backs

on the paſt, we baniſh it from our thoughts, and indeavour to annihilate it, that we may not be made uneaſy with its remembrance. Was Time paſt the object of our frequent and ſerious meditation, together with the dealings of God's Providence with us therein, and our behaviour towards God, it would not appear ſo exceeding ſhort; but as ſuch a review would not afford us much pleaſure, we ſtudiouſly avoid it. Nor would our folly in this conduct be ſo inexcuſable, if, by neglecting the conſideration of the years we have prodigally waſted, we could wipe them out of God's Book, ſo as that he ſhould never call us to account for them; but his eye is nevertheleſs open and attentive, becauſe we ſhut ours [a].

2. We take our eſtimate of Time paſt and to come by different meaſures. Of Time paſt we judge by memory and by experience; of the Time to come by our imagination —by our deſigns and projects—by the diſcontent we are under with our preſent condition—and the hopes we entertain relating to the future.—Let me ſpeak to theſe diſtinctly.

Of the Time paſt we take our account,

1. By our memory. The Time we have lived is thought longer or ſhorter, according as

[a] Hoſ. viii. 2.

as we remember more or leſs about it. Now as it is but little that we can recollect of the train of our actions, when we ſet ourſelves in earneſt to it, and much leſs that we actually do ſo, for want of likeing to ſuch an imployment, it is no wonder we have ſo leſſening an idea of the years that are paſt. As we are active creatures we muſt be ſtill doing ſomewhat or other, our nature will not ſuffer us to be perfectly idle; but tho' all our Time be filled up, yet, on the reflection, it is not much that our memory can recover of the wreck, the greater part by far eſcapes us; which proceeds either from hence, that our memories are weak and narrow, and not capable of lodging ſo many things; or, from our actions being ſo trifling and inſignificant, and done with ſo little attention, as to make no impreſſion on the memory; or rather from both. Time paſt reſembles the ſea with a veſſel here and there floating upon it.

Apparent raræ nantes in gurgite vaſto.

Looking back on our lives, an action or event more remarkable than common now and then occurs to our view; all beſides is empty ſpace, and becauſe empty ſeems almoſt nothing. As the ſpace between us and the ſtars, tho' immenſely great, containing no ſolid objects by which to meaſure it, is

leſs in appearance than a few miles viewed from a riſing ground with fields, rivers, houſes, and other objects for the eye to faſten on, and to judge of the diſtance by.

2. We frame our notion of Time paſt by experience. We have found that to be little which, while it was to come, was eſteemed a great deal; and being thus diſappointed in our expectation of it, and experiencing it to be much leſs than we imagined it, we paſs into the other extreme, and judge it to be much leſs than really it is. Experience undeceives us as to thoſe great thoughts we had of the laſt year when we began it. Oh, what a length of Time was it then deemed! But now we have travelled it over, and that hath proved to be but a momentary duration which we fancied we ſhould never ſee the end of, we are convinced of our having miſreckoned. But how convinced? So as not to be guilty of the ſame error in relation to the years that are yet future? Alas, No; but we magnify theſe as much as we did the paſt; tho' as to the paſt we are ſenſible, and freely acknowledge, that we were miſtaken. Is it not ſtrange we ſhould thus delude ourſelves, and at once ſee our miſtake and repeat it? By theſe two rules we eſtimate Time paſt, memory, and experience, which occaſions its appearing ſo ſhort to us. On the contrary,

Of

Of the Time to come we take our account,

1. From our imagination. Imagination and memory are, as it were, two glaſſes, through which the ſoul beholds the ſeveral objects that come before it. The nature of memory is to leſſen and contract the diſtance; it is the property of imagination to extend it; and at the ſame time that it increaſes the diſtance, it magnifies the object too; wherein it differs from all other proſpectives, which, in proportion as they widen the diſtance of a thing leſſen its magnitude. What a mighty ſpace of Time do we fancy a few years to be? And how important is every thing which our imagination repreſents as happening to us in them? Indeed reaſon is a higher faculty than imagination and was beſtowed on us by our wiſe and bountiful Creator to this very end and purpoſe, among many others, that we ſhould not be impoſed on by the falſe reports of fancy. But what ſhall we ſay? We love to be deceived, and will not hearken to Reaſon, leſt it ſhould rob us of thoſe pleaſures of imagination with which we fooliſhly amuſe and entertain ourſelves.

2. We eſtimate future Time by our deſigns and projects; and proportionably as we multiply theſe, we inlarge that. One man is intent on filling his bags, and making his heap

heap bigger; another contrives to pull down his barns and build greater in their room. There are ſuch and ſuch journies to be taken, ſuch and ſuch things to be done, ſuch and ſuch projects to be tried, ſuch and ſuch alterations to be made, all this will require a great deal of Time; whereupon we graſp at as much Time as we ſhall need, we pleaſe ourſelves with the thoughts of many years, and of the many things we will do every year.

——*Quid æternis minorem*
Conſiliis animum fatigas?

Saith the heathen poet, admirably well, *Why ſhouldeſt thou tire thy mind with meditating long deſigns, to which it is no way equal?* It is great folly to do thus, but it is extremely natural. The brain is continually teeming with ſome careful thought, and the ſoul always buſy in forging devices regarding the preſent life. And tho' it be no reaſon why we ſhould think of Life as long becauſe we have found out work for it, and cannot juſtify our conduct but on ſuppoſition of having a great deal of Time to ſpare, yet we make it a reaſon; and that our Time may be commenſurate to our cares and buſineſs we purpoſely miſtake in meaſuring it.

3. We

3. We take our account of future Time from our diſcontent with our preſent condition. Time flows not now ſwifter, and now ſlower, but keeps on with one ſteady invariable motion. However tho' Time differs not, men differ in their notions about it; one thinks it runs, another that it creeps; for one it moves too faſt, for the other too ſlow. The foundation of this difference is to be ſought for in the different tempers and poſtures of their minds. He that is uneaſy and diſſatisfied in himſelf, exerciſed with affliction, and fretful becauſe he is ſo, counts every day to be ten, weeks are years with him, and years are ages; when he looks forward a ſmall Time is a tedious duration, and he is ready to conclude will never arrive, nor the preſent hour or day be at an end. So *Job*, who yet was an example of patience. [b] *When I lie down I ſay, when ſhall I ariſe, and the night be gone? And I am full of toſſing too and fro unto the dawning of the day.* Now when there are ſo many afflicted perſons in the world, and ſo many more diſcontented, it is not at all wonderful that there are ſo many to whom Time appears longer in the proſpect than it does in the review.

Hence by the way, I would obſerve the aggravated miſery of the damned. If to a man in a ſuffering ſtate, or even in a ſtate which would be comfortable enough, was he not his own tor-

[b] Job vii. 4.

tormentor, a ſpace of Time which he can eaſily look to the end of is ſo very grievous; Lord, (think I) what muſt Eternity be, a duration that hath no period, when it is to be worn away in pain, ſhame, anguiſh, and deſpair! A groundleſs diſcontent often makes our burthen, but theirs is really intolerable.

4. The Time to come is extended by the hopes we cheriſh in relation to it. We firſt indeavour to perſuade ourſelves (and it is no great difficulty to do this when we heartily ſet about it) that by ſuch a Time we ſhall ſee a great many happy events; and then having taken up this perſuaſion, we are in haſte to have our hopes crowned with injoyment, and think every minute in the mean while to be double. Thus when the mother of *Siſera* was eagerly expecting the return of her ſon from a glorious and joyful conqueſt, ſhe is deſcribed as looking out of the window, and crying, [c] *Why is his chariot ſo long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?* Her wiſe ladies anſwered her, yea, ſhe returned anſwer to herſelf, *Have they not ſped? Have they not divided the prey? To Siſera a prey of divers colours of needle-work on both ſides, meet for them that take the ſpoil?* The mother imagined ſhe ſhould never ſee her ſon's arrival, ſo impatiently did ſhe long for the welcome time; as indeed ſhe never did. The wiſeman hath obſerved that *Hope*

[c] Judg. v. 21, &c.

[d] *Hope defered maketh the heart ſick.* The mind grows tired with its own expectations as a bird wearies itſelf in beating againſt the ſides of its cage. Our impatience to be in poſſeſſion of our wiſhes makes us accuſe Time, that unfainting traveller, of being ſlack in his motion; wherein we are like the merchant, who, having ſhips at ſea richly freighted, fancies they are long in their voyage, tho' winds and waves conſpire to drive them to their haven. Thus (as an ingenious author takes notice) "Altho' the whole of life is allowed "by every one to be ſhort, (and I may add, "they all complain of its ſhortneſs) the ſe-"veral diviſions of it appear long and tedi-"ous. The Uſurer would be very well ſa-"tisfied to have all the Time annihilated "that lies between the preſent moment and "next quarter-day. The Minor longs to be at "age, then to be a man of buſineſs, then to "make up an eſtate, then to arrive at honours, "then to retire. Several hours of the day "hang upon our hands; nay we wiſh away "whole years, and travel through Time as "thro' a country filled with many wild and "empty waſtes, which we would fain hurry "over, that we may arrive at thoſe ſeveral "little ſettlements, or imaginary points of "reſt, which are diſperſed up and down in "it." And notwithſtanding that we are generally diſappointed in our hopes, we renew

[d] Prov. xiii. 12.

new them again as faſt as they are broken in pieces, and ſo continue doing till death comes and convinces us that our long life was but a moment, and our fine hopes but a dream.

I ſhall now make a brief Application of this point. It is certain, and a thing not denied, that the ſame portion of Time, as it is paſt and to come, appears of a different length; in this caſe our concern is to be on our guard, and to take heed that this wrong appearance do not delude and inſnare us, and produce errors in our practice. And that it may not we ſhould often call to mind theſe two things—that the Time paſt is much longer than it appears—and that the Time to come is much ſhorter.

1. It will be of uſe frequently to conſider, that the Time paſt is much longer than it appears; I mean, as it is a part of our ſhort life. It is neceſſary we ſhould conſider this, that we may be thankful for the Time we have injoyed, may be humble and penitent for having ſpent it no better, and ſee the neceſſity of quickening our pace, and doubling our diligence for the future. Time is the gift of God, of ſuch ineſtimable value, that gold and ſilver are not to be weighed againſt it. And if we judge of the Time we have lived by its appearance, what muſt follow? Muſt we not conceive more meanly of the gift, and detract from the bounty of the

the giver? A benefactor ſupplies me with a conſiderable ſum of money, which, in caſe I ſhould judge of it by the figure it makes through one end of a proſpective glaſs, I ſhould eſteem but a trifle; but as I ſhould be ridiculous to ground my judgement of it on ſuch a view, ſo I ſhould be ungrateful: and yet, if it be not the ſame thing, it is one very much like it, that we are all guilty of, when takeing a ſurvey of our paſt Time we forget to conſider it as much more than it appears.—It is further needful we ſhould thus conſider our Time, that we may be duly humbled for haveing miſpent and miſimployed ſo much of it. We caſt a careleſs eye over the Time paſt of our lives, and ſo value it as a thing of no moment; but oh, we forget how many years one after another have been indulged us; we forget how many opportunities have occured, and been ſlighted; we forget how much Time we have had to work out our ſalvation, and how little, how very little of this important work is yet done! Let us be humbled under a ſenſe of our idleneſs, our folly, our guilt.—Finally, the ſame thought is expedient to teach us greater care and induſtry in improving this talent. Is ſo much of my ſhort life gone? So much of my little ſtock ſpent? I find I have none left for vanity and ſloth; happy, if by my utmoſt application I can repair my loſſes. A man that hath been loitering away

away his Time, and conſults not the clock or the ſun to know the hour of the day, but concludes he hath not gone far in the day, becauſe the Time hath ſlid away unobſerved, will be incourged in his ſloth, and ſtill delay to ſet to his buſineſs; it is the ſame in our ſpiritual concerns.

2. We ſhould conſider that the Time to come is much ſhorter than it appears. Here what is wanting in real length we piece out in our imagination, in which we are extremely imprudent; for beſides that we may not live ſo many years as we childiſhly count upon, and it is very probable that we ſhall not, if we ſhould ſee thoſe years come and go, they would ſhrink in the wearing as much as all before them. And why ſhould we look upon it as a long Time that we have to live? Shall we not hereby be deceived into thoughts and purſuits that agree not to frail dying creatures? Shall we not be tempted to delay and poſtpone the concerns of our ſouls? And put ourſelves under the power of things preſent and ſenſible? This is the uſual and almoſt unavoidable conſequence of mens regarding the remaining part of their lives as a long ſpace of Time; whereas the effects of conſidering it as much ſhorter than it appears to a misjudging fancy, are as beneficial as the others are miſchievous. For were this truth once well ſetled in our apprehenſions and often and

ſeriouſly thought on by us, *that Time is ſhort*, we ſhould be quite other perſons then we are, and look upon all things about us with quite another eye. See how the Apoſtle improves this meditation, [e] *But this I ſay, brethren, the Time is ſhort. It remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they poſſeſſed not; and they that uſe this world as not abuſing it; for the faſhion of this world paſſeth away.* This thought would ſerve to cool our deſires, to moderate our paſſions, to check our hopes, our fears, and our delight about theſe periſhing things. We ſhould not be thoughtful for to morrow, nor boaſt of to morrow, becauſe future Time is much too ſhort to warrant one or the other. Suppoſing riches to increaſe, we ſhould not ſet our hearts upon them, the Time is ſo very ſhort in which we can injoy them. Suppoſing our troubles to multiply, yet ſhould we bear up under them with chriſtian courage and magnanimity, knowing our afflictions to be both light and for a moment. And is a momentary comfort or trouble worth makeing ſuch a ſtir about? Would it not be a folly to let my affections be carried out to things that are on the wing, and fly away with the ſwiftneſs of an eagle? Or to ſink

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[e] 1 Cor. vii. 29, &c.

under a burthen that will shortly be taken off from my shoulders? And as this representation of Time would have a good influence on our passions, to regulate them when in danger of being too powerfully excited by the good or evil occurrences of life, so would it have an influence as kindly upon our actions. "Since my Time is so much "shorter than it appears, I know what I "have to do. My business is to serve and "glorify my God, and save my soul; to "walk by the gospel rule, to improve every "opportunity to my spiritual good, and al-"ways to act as one on his probation for "eternity, and just ready to be summoned "to his audit; looking for, and hastening to, "the coming of the day of God, wherein the "heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and "the elements shall melt with fervent heat."

So much for the first doctrine, *viz.* The same portion of Time appears longer or shorter, as it is past or to come.

II. In the sight of God the longest term of years is as nothing. [f] *Behold, thou hast made my days as an hand's-breadth, and my age is as nothing before thee.* Speaks the Psalmist this only because the life of man is now cut short, and *the days of our years are threescore years and ten?* Was it, I say, in respect only of the present narrow bounds of

[f] Psal. xxxix. 5.

of human life, that he ſaith *his age was as nothing before God?* No, for in my text, alluding to the long lives of the firſt generation of men, he ſaith, *That a thouſand years in God's ſight are but as yeſterday, or as a watch in the night.* And it is the ſame if we remove the boundary thouſands or millions of years forward; this mighty ſum of years conſiſting of as many figures as can ſtand by one another in the longeſt line, is in his eye but a collection of ſo many cyphers, of which the ſum total is *nothing.* It is eaſy to give an account how this may be, and indeed that it cannot be otherwiſe, I ſhall mention in a few particulars.

1. God is infinite in knowledge. He comprehends in one view the paſt, preſent, and to come; and with a ſingle glance beholds that Eternity of duration which hath neither begining or ending. [g] *Great is our Lord, and of great power, his underſtanding is infinite.* It is on account of this ſuper-eminent knowledge of his that he challanges the heathen deities. [h] *Let them ſhew us what ſhall happen; let them ſhew the former things what they be, that we may conſider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare to us things to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods. Who hath declared from the begining, that we may know? And before Time, that*

[g] Pſal. cxlvii. 7. [h] Iſa. xli. 22, &c.

we may ſay, He is righteous? The glory he aftewards himſelf lays claim to. [i] *I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another, nor my praiſe to graven Images. Behold, the former things are come to paſs, and new things do I declare, before they ſpring forth I tell you of them.* From the height of his underſtanding, as from a watch-tower, he ſurveys the long ſeries and progreſs of ages; and thoſe events which are hid from us in the obſcure womb of Futurity, are to him ever and alike preſent. Now to an eye that can command this boundleſs proſpect, the age of man (I might as well have ſaid of the world) is ſcarce a Point. A ſpace of ground, but a mile in compaſs, appears of a great extent to one that ſtands on a level, and cannot look beyond it; while a perſon, that from a high mountain can on every ſide ſee a vaſt way around him, paſſes over ſuch a ſpot almoſt without notice. How much more would he do ſo, if he had a clear idea of the diſtance between earth and the remoteſt heaven, and could at once take in the whole univerſe. The whole globe of earth in ſuch a compariſon would be no more than a ſingle grain of ſand is now. It is thus, if I may ſo explain it, that the Omniſcient God beholds the longeſt term of years as bounded at both ends by Eternity, in which it is ſwallowed up and loſt, as a ſingle drop in the wide ocean.

2. He

[i] Iſai. xliii. 8, 9.

2. He is God bleſſed for ever. His title is [k] *the bleſſed God*; He injoys the perfection of Beatitude, and never hath the leaſt diſſatisfaction to interrupt his divine contentment, *in his preſence is fulneſs of joy, and at his right hand are rivers of pleaſure for evermore.* And as a ſtream of water runing over a ſmooth bottom, and of a great depth beſides, glides with a ſtill and inſenſible tho' rapid motion, ſo ages of delight ſlide on in a profound peace and tranquillity, and are accounted as moments by him who is infinitely happy and well pleaſed in the contemplation and injoyment of himſelf. We find that joy adds wings to Time itſelf, and that the more compleat and ecſtatick our joy, the ſwifter is the flight of Time. How quick do the hours come round when we are pleaſed with ourſelves, and with our company. But our beſt pleaſures on this ſide heaven are imperfect, and of ſhort continuance; otherwiſe life, when it was paſt, would appear but like a winter's-day. In heaven, the bleſſedneſs of which place is as large as the capacities of its inhabitants, and as immortal as themſelves, a Day equals an Age of ours in worth, and an Age in length ſeems not to exceed a Day. But tho' the bleſſedneſs of the righteous in that upper world be perfect in its kind, yet, when compared with the bleſſedneſs of the ſupreme Being, it

[k] 1 Tim. i. 11.

bears no other proportion then that of finite to infinite. How little muſt be all Time then, before him who is thus incomprehenſibly bleſſed! It muſt in his ſight be as much leſs than it is in the thoughts of the moſt happy of his creatures, as his felicity is greater than theirs.

3. God is eternal. He not only hath a comprehenſive knowledge of Eternity, but hath already exiſted an Eternity. He is the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Firſt and the Laſt, the Begining and the End; the begining or exiſtence to all things, and therefore to be the end of their actions, himſelf without either begining or end. *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever* he had *formed the earth and the world, even from everlaſting to everlaſting* he is *God*; is the language of the *Pſalm* from which my text is taken. A little after which it is added, *A thouſand years in thy ſight are but as yeſterday.* So that, you ſee, the *Pſalmiſt* reſolves it into the Eternity of God, that the greateſt finite duration is contemptible in his ſight. He that was numberleſs ages before any thing elſe had a being, of whom we are not able to ſay that there ever was a Time when he was not—He whoſe duration is not capable of being meaſured by any lengths of Time never ſo often repeated; who, having been from Eternity, will not have exiſted longer ten millions of years hence, than he had ten millions of years ago; how is he to be adored

adored for this unfathomable attribute by all reaſonable creatures, all whoſe years thrown together can make no addition to his Eternity! Our own experience ſupplies us with the obſervation, that the longer we have been in the world, the more contracted and diminutive is the notion we have of future Time. The child fancies a ſingle year is a vaſt while in revolving; the youth looking forward to manhood, thinks it a prodigious while before he arrives to that ſtate. A few years, becauſe they have not ſeen many, are by the child and the youth eſteemed a wonderful term; but now to the man far advanced in life, the ſame portion of Time ſhews much leſs; to a perſon before the flood, who was ſome hundreds of years old, they muſt have appeared leſs again; to the angels of light they muſt appear ſtill proportionably leſs, according as it was longer ſince they were created and began to be; but to the everlaſting God that duration, which a man, an angel conceives great, is Infinitely little.

I proceed now to the Application, which I had chiefly an eye to. And here, in the *Firſt* place, I ſhall apply the doctrine in a few Inferences.

1. Is the longeſt term of years, as nothing in the ſight of God? Then this may help to ſolve that objection againſt divine Providence which hath been ſometimes

urged as unanſwerable, taken from the proſperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the righteous. This, I ſay, is abundantly enough to anſwer the difficulty, that the afflictions of the one, and the proſperity of the other are both temporary. And a temporary duration in the eye of God is as none at all. I called them *temporary*, when I ſhould have ſaid that they are only *momentary*. Art thou afflicted, and ready to cry out with the diſconſolate Pſalmiſt, *Is his mercy clean gone for ever?* Conſider, chriſtian, it is thy impatience makes thee look on the Time of thy affliction as for ever, which in itſelf, and as God beholds it, is but a ſhort lived moment. So doth God himſelf ſpeak in the Prophet *Iſaiah*. [1] *For a ſmall moment have I forſaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlaſting kindneſs will I have mercy on the, ſaith the Lord thy Redemeer.* How remarkable are thoſe words! How full of conſolation! It is only *in a little wrath* that God withdraws from his people; and this *little wrath is only for a moment*, yea, for a ſmall moment; but his mercies are great, his kindneſs is everlaſting. Think of this, and repine no more againſt Providence. Let every mouth be ſtoped, and all the world ſtand ſilent before God. Art thou a proſperous ſinner? Lift not

[1] Iſai. liv. 7, 8.

not up thine horn on high, ſpeak not with a ſtiff neck, for promotion cometh neither from the eaſt, nor from the weſt, nor from the ſouth, but God is the judge; he puteth down one, and ſeteth up another. What is the duration of thy proſperity to him? Miſtake not, man, it is but a little while that he ſeems to be deaf and blind to thy provocations; and he may let thee alone for ſo little a while, and yet be juſt and holy too. What ſaith the Pſalmiſt? [m] *Surely thou didſt ſet them in ſlippery places, thou didſt caſt them down into deſtruction. How are they brought into deſolation as in a moment? They are utterly conſumed with terrors. As in a dream when one awaketh, ſo, O Lord, when thou awakeſt thou ſhalt deſpiſe their image!* Thou reckoneſt thyſelf to ſtand firm, the Pſalmiſt tells thee, *thou art ſet in a ſlippery place*; thou bleſſeſt thyſelf as the happieſt of men, he tells thee thy happineſs is but a dream; in thy own conceit thou flouriſheſt for a long Time, he tells thee that it is only for a moment. Exalt not thyſelf againſt God; miſconſtrue not his ſilence; inſult not his Providence; the Lord ſhall laugh at thee, for he ſeeth that thy day is coming, the day of vengeance, a day of trouble and diſtreſs, a day of waſteneſs and deſolation, a day of darkneſs and gloomineſs, a day of clouds and thick darkneſs.

2. This

[m] Pſal. lxxiii. 18, &c.

2. This conſideration accounts for the ſeemingly ſlow accompliſhment of God's Promiſes and Threatenings. The promiſe made to *Abraham* of inheriting the land of *Canaan* was not fulfilled till near five hundred years after. The promiſe of the *Meſſiah* to become incarnate, and redeem mankind was given immediately after the fall, but iſſued not into the event till the end of about four thouſand years. And from hence *Celſus*, a great enemy to the chriſtian religion, takes occaſion to compare God to *Jupiter* in the Comedy, as waking out of a long ſleep *. But when it is conſidered, that in the ſight of God *a thouſand years are but as yeſterday*, and that *he calleth thoſe things which be not, as though they were*, no time is long that intervenes between the promiſe and its accompliſhment. And therefore it is obſervable, concerning the inſtance firſt mentioned, that God ſaith to *Abraham*, *I have made thee a father of many nations*—he doth not ſay, *I will make thee ſo*—to ſignify that there is no difference of Time with reſpect to him. He [n] *calleth thoſe things which are not, as though they were.* And tho' before Chriſt came in the fleſh ſeveral ages were elapſed, yet it being conſidered, that *he was the lamb of God, ſlain from the foundation of the world* in the decree of God, and in types and figures, and that the efficacy of his death reached as well to

* Origen contra Celſum, lib. 6. [n] Rom. iv. 17.

to all the generations before as to thoſe that followed, the lateneſs of his coming cannot be thought to derogate from the wiſdom or love of God in ſending him into the world. So that what the Prophet affirms of a particular caſe, holds univerſally true. ° *The viſion is for an appointed Time; but at the end it ſhall ſpeak, and ſhall not lie; tho' it tarry, wait for it, becauſe it will ſurely come, it will ſurely come, it will not tarry.* In the ſame verſe the prophecy is ſuppoſed *to tarry*, and yet ſaid *not to tarry*; the reaſon is, that in our thoughts it tarries, but as God's thoughts are not as ours, in reality it makes haſte. Let us apply this to the promiſes of our future reſt and glory. Beholding them afar off we ſhould embrace them, confeſs that we are ſtrangers and pilgrims upon earth; as ſuch make the beſt of the entertainment we meet with, and contentedly want our happineſs till we come where is its proper ſeat and manſion. Death lies between us and the felicity promiſed; but how far off is death? At moſt, no further than a few years; and then the everlaſting door opens, and we not only behold the inheritance of the ſaints, but enter upon it. And then for the divine threatenings, though it be moſt true that God is not ſwift to execute them, but patiently waits for the effect of his lenity and forbearance, it is not therefore the leſs certain

° Hab. ii. 3.

tain on the other hand, that he does not ſo delay the puniſhment threatened, as any way to incourage the preſumption of ſinners; or to give them the leaſt ground to believe, that, however peremptory his threatenings be, he will not be exact to his word. If he defers the ſtroke, it is to give thee Time to diſarm his anger by thy repentance and amendment; and after all, the utmoſt limits of his patience (which when compared with the heinouſneſs of our ſins, and his infinite holineſs and juſtice deſerves our aſtoniſhment) in regard of his Eternity are very inconſiderable. He liveth for ever.

3. Behold here the foundation on which the general and laſt judgement of the world is delayed! The old world injoyed God's forbearance for ſeveral centuries; but however before the concluſion of two thouſand years, being overflowed with water, periſheth. Since the deluge the world hath, in ſome ages of it, been deplorably wicked, and is ſo at this preſent, and yet hath ſtood many thouſand of years the object of God's favourable regard, and, for ought we know, may do ſo ſome thouſands of years longer. We who are apt to wonder, why God ſhould continue ſuch an apoſtate race, and bear the manners of ſo many generations of ſinners, can hardly forbear ſaying as the ſcoffers mentioned by the Apoſtle *Peter*, *Where is the promiſe of his coming? For ſince the fathers fell*

fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the begining of the creation. But the doctrine contained in my text is a plain confutation of this profane arguing, and applied to this very purpose by that Apostle, who, borrowing the words of the Psalmist with a very little variation, saith, [p] *But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also with the works that are therein shall be burnt up.* This Apostle saith, *that the day of the Lord will come*; another of the inspired penmen speaks of [q] *yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.* Not to mention, that the world hath not yet filled up the measure of its iniquities, nor God yet filled up the number of his people; not to mention, that the works of Providence are not yet finished, that prophecies are yet unfulfilled, and glorious designs yet unaccomplished; I shall only take notice of the consideration which the text suggests, that the long term of

[p] 2 Pet. iii. 8, &c. [q] Heb. x. 37.

of years, whatever it may ſeem to us, is nothing in his ſight who hath Eternity ſubject to his view. *A thouſand years are but as yeſterday*, and conſequently the many thouſands that may paſs from the begining to the final conſummation of things, are, at moſt, but like ſo many days that are fled and gone. Be it, therefore, never more ſaid, *that our Lord delayeth his coming*.—Theſe are the Inferences, which I thought did naturally flow from the doctrine. I now haſten to a uſe of Exhortation.

Secondly, Let us then be exhorted to frame our apprehenſions of Time by the judgment of God. After our utmoſt indeavour there will be a vaſt proportion between our thoughts of it and his; however let us bring our conceptions as near as we can to this ſtandard, and the beſt method we can take for this purpoſe is to compare Time with Eternity. This we can do in ſome degree having an idea of Eternity; and this we ſhould do becauſe we are appointed to Eternity.

1. We are in ſome ſort able to compare Time and Eternity, being not without an idea of this interminable duration, tho' very imperfect. We have not a poſitive, adequate, and comprehenſive view of Eternity, no created Being hath ſo; it is the prerogative of the Infinite and Eternal Mind; but we can cenceive of it after an obſcure and indefinite manner, ſomewhat like the ſurvey a man takes of the ocean from on board a veſſel ſailing

ing in the midſt of it; he ſees the ocean, though not the whole ocean, and, where his ſight is terminated by its own weakneſs, can perceive that the ocean extends further than he can ſee. Inferior creatures are ſhut up within the preſent Time, but the mind of man diffuſes and ſtretches itſelf into futurity, and paſſing over all the bounds of imagination, can ſuppoſe a duration that is without bound. Now when the thoughts do thus dwell upon Eternity, how does Time, the longeſt Time, diſappear! Conceive a mountain of ſand riſing up to the ſtars, (it is a ſimilitude often made uſe of to illuſtrate this ſubject) though this amazing heap be ſuppoſed to waſte but a ſand every million of years, it will in Time be exhauſted, and ſink down to a level; but Eternity will never, never, be all ſpent; when innumerable ages have run out, it will be as far from ending as ever, becauſe indeed it hath no end.

2. As we are able to make this compariſon between Time and Eternity, ſo we are nearly concerned to do it, in regard that God hath deſigned us for Eternity. A plain proof that this is the intention of our Creator is the idea of Eternity, mentioned before, joined with the reſtleſs unextinguiſhable deſire of it that every man may obſerve in himſelf; this idea and this deſire are both natural, I mean belonging to primitive nature; and therefore we may well conclude there

there is ſome object to match this idea, and to ſatisfy this deſire. God never planted deſires in any of his creatures for no other end but to be their torment; as it is evident the deſire, without the hope, of immortality would be to a man: inſomuch that, ſeting aſide the belief of an immortal life, it is impoſſible for Omnipotence to make a rational creature perfectly happy, ſince the ſhadow of death would darken the brighteſt ſcene; and the fear of it, like a worm hid in the root, conſume and kill all his delights; and with this evidence from Reaſon agrees the teſtimony of Scripture, *Mat.* xxv. 46. And as our idea of Eternity is a proof of it, ſo is it likewiſe an indication of the nature of that Eternity which is reſerved for us. Our idea of Eternity is not of a duration actually infinite, but of one that is increaſing to infinity. And ſuch is the Eternity that man is to injoy. Our actual exiſtence will be always finite and temporary; for after never ſo many revolutions of ages, were we then to ceaſe to exiſt, the line of our duration would be terminated both ways, and conſequently be finite; for which reaſon it is not ſo proper to ſay of any creature that it is *eternal*, as that it is *immortal*. This mortal life had a begining, and will have an end; the life to come hath a begining, but no end. The ſoul will never once die; and the man, after the reſurrection, will not die any more.

Now

Now when this is the caſe, that we belong to Eternity, and have ſo great an intereſt in it, ſhould we not often think of Eternity? Should we not often compare Time and Eternity together? The *Perſians* have this moral ſentence inſcribed on a publick bridge at *Iſpahan—The world is a true bridge, make an end of going over it*—Over this bridge we are travelling into a boundleſs region, an eternal world. We muſt be ſtupid not to reflect whither we are going; without all underſtanding, to have everlaſting life before us, and not comparatively to deſpiſe this temporal, this fading life. Were we uſed ſoberly to contemplate the difference between a temporal and eternal duration, we ſhould reckon this life but a ſpan, we ſhould tranſact the buſineſs of life, and receive the events of it with more moderation; and an awful concern for Eternity would ſilence all our diſtracting cares about Time, and the things of Time, as the groans of a dying man are no more heard amidſt the roar of cannon.

I ſhall conclude the whole with a little Advice concerning the *New Year.* Let us conſider that all our Times are not only in the ſight of God, as the objects of his foreknowledge, but in his hand, as ſubject to his uncontroulable decree. Let us therefore pray, as the author of this Pſalm, *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply*

our hearts unto wisdom. Particularly let us shew our wisdom in these two things.

1. Let us resolve, each one for himself, to live after a manner as if this was to be our *last year.* It is not impossible but it may; nor very unlikely, considering the many thousands that every hour leave this world in one part of it or other. But granting we are more likely to live than to die this year, yet seeing the event doth not always follow the greatest likelihood, and the consequence of being mistaken is so very terrible, and never to be retrieved, it cannot but be our wisdom to act upon the supposition of our dying this year. Our last year will come; this none of you questions; and when it comes may begin altogether like this; we may be possessed of as much health and strength at our entrance into it, and every thing may promise as fairly; and for the same reason as my last year may begin like this, why may not this be my last? Have I any marks by which to know my last year when it arrives? As in the days before the flood, [r] *They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that* Noah *entered into the ark; and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away*; and as it shall be the same when the son of man cometh to judge the world, no less sudden and unexpected is the approach of death to particular persons. It surprizes them

[r] Mat. xxiv. 37, &c.

them in the midſt of their buſineſs and pleaſures, hurries away their ſouls before the tribunal of God, naked, trembling, aſtoniſhed, and in that very day all their thoughts periſh.

But you are in the flower and ſtrength of youth, and have no apprehenſions of death's being ſo near. This, I confeſs, were ſomewhat if young men were privileged from the arreſt of death, or not ſo liable to its ſtroke as thoſe that are older. But alas, do we not ſee the young man and the old, the ſtrong and the feeble, carried without any order to the grave? [f] *One man* (as *Job* expreſſes it) *dieth in his full ſtrength, being wholly at eaſe and quiet. Another dieth in the bitterneſs of his ſoul, and never eateth with pleaſure.* Well then, ſince I muſt die, and may die this year; what do I talk of this year? Since this very night my ſoul may be required of me, I will from this moment begin to live as a dying creature. I will ſettle my peace with God by a ſincere repentance of all my ſins againſt him; make ſure of an intereſt in the only Saviour of ſinners; eſteem religion my chief buſineſs and concern; work out my ſalvation with fear and trembling; redeem my Time; be holy in all manner of converſation; die daily to the world; mind heavenly things; and converſe much with myſelf, with my God, and with Eternity. It is thus a dying creature

[f] Job xxi. 23, &c.

ought to live, and ſuch by the grace of God, I am reſolved my future life ſhall be. It will be no prejudice, nor diſſervice at all to me ſo to live, though I ſhould ſurvive this, and many years more. By living after this manner I ſhall render myſelf fit for longer life, for the improvement, and for the injoyment of it; I ſhall have more peace in my own boſom, and paſs the remainder of my days free from the ſervile dread of death. And for this alone, if there was nothing elſe, it is worth my while to lead a holy life. If I ſhould die this year, I am ſafe and happy. Death, come when it will, cannot be untimely; or where, and how it will, cannot be terrible. I foreſee I ſhall be tempted to worldlineſs, to delays, to a vain confidence of Futurity; but I will encounter and overcome the temptation with this thought—*that poſſibly I am to die this year, and before I am advanced far into it*—which is the conſideration with which the Apoſtle *James* repreſſes the overforward hopes and purpoſes of ſome, that they would go to ſuch a city, and there continue a year, and by and ſell and get gain; *whereas* (ſaith he) *ye know not what ſhall be on the morrow* (they made ſure of a year, and knew not what ſhould be on the morrow) *for what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſhes away.*

2. Let

2. Let us provide for the changes of the year, which may be great, ſudden, and many. In the other world eternal ages will roll on without any the leaſt change, but it is not ſo here. For our parts, we know not what a year, a month, a week, a day, may bring forth; yea as the wiſe Poet obſerves,

Quid quiſque vitet nunquam homini ſatis
Cautum eſt in horas.——

A man can never be ſufficiently on his guard againſt the accidents which the next hour may bring with it. What is more common than to hear people ſay, when any notable alteration hath befallen them, *How little did I think of this ſuch a Time; as yeſterday, or the laſt week!* We ſhall do well to make a like reflection before-hand. How little do I now imagine what changes a ſhort Time will produce! There is a Time to every purpoſe and to every event, and hardly is there that thing to be mentioned which doth not become ſeaſonable in its turn; and when it is ſo it ſhall come round. As the night againſt the day, and winter againſt ſummer, ſo is adverſity ſet over againſt proſperity. Times are hidden from all but the Almighty; [t] *For man alſo knoweth not his Time; as the fiſhes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the ſnare, ſo are the ſons of men*

[t] Eccleſ. ix. 12.

men ſnared in an evil Time, when it cometh ſuddenly upon them. This change of Times is neceſſary to inſtruct us in the knowledge both of the world, and of ourſelves; to convince us of its vanity, and that it cannot be our happineſs, our reſt, our home, and final ſtate; of ourſelves, how ignorant, how weak, how dependent we are; to cure us of our pride, our earthlineſs, our ſenſuality, to mortify corruption, and to improve the graces of the divine Spirit in us. Againſt theſe changes if we are willing to be provided, let us ſecure a refuge in God, and arm and prepare our own minds. [u] *God is the ſtrength of the righteous in the Time of trouble.* By cleaving to him we injoy the benefit of his ſtrength and immutability; as a leaf which lying on the ground is driven to and fro by every wind, when it hangs and flouriſhes on the tree can endure the ſhock of violent ſtorms. It is a mutable world that we live in, but under the direction of an unchangeable God, whoſe purpoſes of love vary not, tho' his diſpenſations do. All our Times are in his hands, he orders their ſucceſſion, and this with a gracious view to the ſpiritual and final happineſs of his people. He will ſuſtain us under our burthens, and deliver us out of our troubles; for which reaſon let us truſt in him at all Times. And next to a well-grounded truſt in God, let us remember

to

[u] Pſal. xxxvii. 39.

to arm and prepare our own minds, with a wiſe foreſight of the evils that are to come, which are not half ſo grievous and ſtuning when they come not unexpected; with chriſtian patience, fortitude and reſolution, which will ſteel the mind, and render it invulnerable; and finally, with the hope of a more bleſſed world, which as the anchor doth the ſhip, will keep us from fluctuating with the things around us. By this means we ſhall have as much ſtedfaſtneſs and ſettlement as the nature of our ſtate and circumſtances in the world will permit. We may be ſometimes a little ſhaken, but never removed from the firm baſis we ſtand on. The aſſured belief, the lively conſideration, and comfortable hope of a future ſtate, where a thouſand years ſpent in full content and felicity are but as one day; of a city that hath foundations; a houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; a crown of glory that fadeth not away; of unmixed joys, uninterrupted ſatisfaction, and pleaſures that run with a perpetually freſh and never failing current, have virtue more than ſufficient to fortify the ſoul againſt preſent changes, and to preſerve it in an even ſtate of peace and tranquillity, till God ſhall command its diſcharge from this body of ſin and death, and receive it to its everlaſting reſt.

Dying in FAITH.

A

SERMON,

Occasioned by the

DEATH

Of the Reverend

Mr. STEPHEN JAMES.

1725.

TO

Mrs. *JAMES.*

MADAM,

AS it was in compliance with the request of Mr. James, *which he was pleased to signify some time before his Death, that I preached the following Sermon, so I now publish it as Yours. The nature of the Subject, so admirably fitted to animate the christian in a course of Holiness and Obedience, and to administer comfort under the loss of pious Relatives, was, I believe, your principal inducement in desireing its publication. The Argument is confessedly noble; I wish it may not fail of its effect for want of more spirit and life in the management. As to the sad Occasion of this Discourse, You need not be minded that the Dispensations of Providence, however unsearchable they may sometimes be, are always righteous, and wise, and good; and this, with the consideration of that better world, where all that die in Faith injoy the transporting pleasures of sight, ought to reconcile You to the*

the removal of One, with whom You had so long lived in the tenderest friendship, and in a union which nothing but death could dissolve. May the memory of our Friends departed in the Lord lead us to meditate oftner of that happy Place and Society, from which all sin and sorrow, and imperfection, are for ever excluded, and prove a most powerful incitement, to live more as fellow-citizens with the saints, and expectants of the same blessedness and glory.

I am,

MADAM,

Your Affectionate Friend

and Humble Servant,

HENRY GROVE.

SERMON IV.

Dying in Faith.

HEBREWS XI. 13.

These all died in Faith----

AND O how desireable is such a death! What wise and good man would not chuse to die in Faith, much rather than to live in the happiest condition this world affords without it? He that liveth in pleasure is dead while he liveth; he that dieth in Faith, though he die, yet shall he live; yea, he does not so truly die, as pass from one life to another, to a pure and perfect and endless life, from a life that is mixed with death; while he seems to fall by the hand of his last enemy, he riseth more glorious from that fall, and, yielding himself a captive, is more than conqueror through Faith. The man that liveth without Faith, lives under the dominion of sin, which reigns in his mortal body, is big with innumerable

merable evils, and, at laſt, bringeth forth death. How much happier he, who, dying in Faith, returns his body to the duſt, that he may receive it free from all taint of corruption, and all the penal effects of ſin, at the reſurrection! Thus happy were all thoſe divine ſouls, whoſe Faith is celebrated in this chapter, whatever notion a vain world might have of them, or what treatment ſoever a wicked and ill-natured world ſaw fit to give them. So many examples as we here meet with of an heroick Faith, ſo many victories and triumphs are we to remember. *Theſe all died in Faith.* But who were *all theſe?* All before-mentioned are primarily intended; but, as we may very well ſuppoſe, not only; ſince by parity of reaſon the ſame may be affirmed of all that follow; the Faith they died in was, in general, that which in the firſt verſe is deſcribed as *the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen.* Faith here is not oppoſed to *Reaſon*, but to *Senſe*.

Through Faith we underſtand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, ſo that things which are ſeen were not made of things that do appear. By Faith alſo we apprehend not only the Exiſtence, but the Nature and Providence of God, a ſupreme, eternal and moſt perfect Being, every where preſent, but no where viſible; theſe things are plainly out of the ſphere of Senſe, but not beyond that

of

of Reaſon; the ſame Writer (I mean the Apoſtle *Paul*, who moſt probably was the Author of this Epiſtle) having elſewhere obſerved[a], that *the inviſible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead; ſo that they are without excuſe, who knowing God,* (or being capable of knowing him by the light of Reaſon) *do not glorify him as God.* Of theſe unſeen things Faith is therefore ſaid *to be the evidence*, becauſe to him that firmly believes them they have the ſame reality, and make much the ſame deep and lively impreſſions as things manifeſt to Senſe. Beſides which property of Faith, there is this further, that *it is the ſubſtance of things hoped for*; that is, of future good things, inſpiring the believer with a *confident expectation* of them, which ſets them full in his view, and gives him, as it were, immediate poſſeſſion. Such are thoſe good things which God, who cannot lie, hath promiſed, and which the Faith of theſe dying Saints more particularly and intenſely regarded; for ſo, after the words, *theſe all died in Faith*, it immediately follows, *not having received the Promiſes, but having ſeen them afar off they were perſuaded of them, and embraced them, and confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth*; not in this or that particular part of the earth only

[a] Rom. i. 20, 21.

only, in oppoſition to *Canaan*, but in whatever part of the earth they did now or might hereafter reſide, in oppoſition to *Heaven*. The leading Promiſe of all was that of the Meſſiah, the Seed of the Woman, the Saviour of the World; and this, without all peradventure, ought not to be wholly excluded the meaning of the Text, being the chief foundation or corner-ſtone on which the hopes of the pious have been built in all ages.

The ſettlement of *Abraham*'s Poſterity in the Land of *Canaan*, is another Promiſe that makes a conſiderable figure in the begining of the ſacred Hiſtory; but neither this nor the former belong ſo immediately to the ſcope of the words; not this it is plain, becauſe it concerned not thoſe who lived before *Abraham*, to whom the promiſe of a numerous and national poſterity was firſt made, or after the *Iſraelites* had full and quiet poſſeſſion of this good land; of all whom, nevertheleſs, it is ſaid, that *they received not the Promiſe*, v. 39. not indeed either of them, for this reaſon, that the Faith theſe good men died in is, by the three following verſes, made to point directly to a future life, and a happineſs there; *they that ſay ſuch things* (namely, that they are Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth) *declare plainly, that they ſeek a country; and truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned;*

returned; but now they desire a better country, even a heavenly, wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, having prepared for them a city. So that it was a *heavenly country, a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God*, v. 10. that their Faith was fixed upon when dying; conceiving the rest which their Posterity should, or which they themselves did, injoy in *Canaan*, no otherwise than as a faint type or shadow of of that everlasting *rest which remaineth for the people of God.* I shall only observe further, that as the Promise of a Saviour was, in order of nature, the First, so this of a Blessedness to come was the Last; as that supports all the other Promises, so this finishes and crowns them. [b] *This is the Promise which he hath promised us, even eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* From the Words I shall take occasion to handle this general Point of instruction, that

Holy men of old all died in Faith of an unseen Reward.

In speaking to which Doctrine I shall endeavour to satisfy these two Inquiries.

I. What we are to understand by their *Faith of an unseen Reward.*
II. What by their *Dying in this Faith.*

I I. What

[b] 1 John ii. 25. v. 11.

I. What are we to understand by their *Faith of an unseen Reward?* It seems to signify these three things. A full pursuasion of the futurity of such a Reward----A preference of it in their most deliberate and constant choice to any worldly and temporary happiness whatsoever----And a reasonable hope of their being in the number of those for whom this Reward is laid up.

1. This Faith of theirs implies a firm persuasion of the truth of a futute Reward. They were all of them ready to pronounce as the Psalmist, *Verily, there is a Reward for the righteous*---there is another life for all men; there is a life of blessedness and glory for the good. It is reasonable to think, that earlier ages resembled the present in this, that there were too many who laughed alike at all hopes and fears of an afterstate, as groundless and imaginary; and, perhaps, there were more then of this atheistical humour then there are now. Sure I am, if the number of unbelievers be as great now, they are more inexcusable, since the Doctrine of Life and Immortality hath received such an addition of light and evidence both from Reason and Revelation.

But what sensual careless sinners treated as a dream and a fable, the serious and thinking part of mankind always reverenced as a most awful reality. They could never be

be of the opinion, that man periſheth as the beaſt, the ſoul with the body, the thinking with the unthinking part, the part in which man reſembles his maker, with the part in which he is on a level with inferior creatures; that virtue and piety, when removed out of ſight, are as much forgoten of God as by an ungrateful world; or that an Almighty Being hath no better rewards for ſouls that love him, and whom he loves, than ſuch things as he beſtows upon them in this life, and, indeed, in common upon his friends and his enemies: they could never ſuppoſe this to be all the meaning of God's [c] *having reſpect to them*, of their *pleaſing God*, and of thoſe big words, that *he was their God, and their exceeding great reward*; the ſignificancy and loftineſs of the language would put ſuch a lean and beggerly ſenſe quite out of countenance. Why [d] *was not God aſhamed to be called their God, but becauſe he had prepared for them a City?* As much as to ſay, if he had not prepared for them a city, a portion more complete and durable than any he gave them here below, it would have been a reproach to the friendſhip, which, in calling himſelf *their God*, he profeſſed to have for them. To be the Friend of a King ſounds great; to be the Friend of God ſounds infinitely greater than to be one's ſelf a King. Whether their Faith all along took in the

[c] Gen. iv. 4. xv. 1. xvii. 7. [d] Heb. xi. 5, 16.

Reſurrection of the Body, as well as the Immortality of the Soul, and a State of Recompences, is not, ſome may think, altogether ſo certain. It is very likely that it did; and that, beſides a tradition in the church concerning this article of the Reſurrection, they argued the ſame thing from their ſpecial intereſt in God before-mentioned---" For if the " Lord be my God, he is the God of my " intire Perſon, not of one part of me only; " this vile Body ſhall fare the better for its " relation to a Soul that is related to God; " and though it *ſee corruption*, ſhall one day " be *raiſed incorruptable*." They knew that the death of the Body was the execution of a ſentence paſt upon man for the firſt tranſgreſſion, and that therefore ſhould the Body for ever continue in a ſtate of death, it would look as if God was not, and never would be fully reconciled to them. Concerning ſome of theſe antient Saints we read towards the end of the Chapter, [e] *That they were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better reſurrection.* Theſe therefore had the knowledge of a Reſurrection. And if theſe, why not all? Eſpecially when the Tranſlation of *Enoch* in his Body ſeems to have been deſigned as an early intimation of the nature, and extent of the happineſs reſerved for good men in another life.

[e] Ver. 35.

life. Of all the Faithful ſhall *Enoch* and *Elijah* alone hereafter live, and be rewarded, in their Bodies? Reaſon will not allow us to ſuppoſe ſuch a ſtrange difference as this in the happineſs of good men.

2. Their Faith of an unſeen Reward was attended with a preference of it, in their moſt deliberate and conſtant choice, before any worldly and temporary happineſs whatſoever. They did not merely talk contemptably of the world now and then, which is common enough, but think ſo too: it was not a notion they took up in a diſcontented humour, and laid aſide again when the fit was over, but it was their ſtanding uniform judgment *that all is Vanity*; that man's chief happineſs lies not on this ſide the grave, but on the other, not in created goods, but in the love and injoyment of the Creator. [f]*The Lord is my portion, ſaith my Soul, therefore will I hope in him.* "Ah, what are all "theſe things without my God? What is "this earth if I muſt quit all claim to my "heavenly country? Might I have the whole "world upon theſe terms, I would reject it "with indignation. Alas, the world is little "to me now, when I am dying it will be "leſs, and after death nothing at all!"

Where-ever Providence appointed them the place of their habitation, in a more de-

[f] Lament. iii. 24.

lightful or leſs agreeable ſcene, and whatever were the circumſtances alloted them, they never reckoned themſelves at home, never ſaid, *it is good for us to be here*, never voted for an immortality upon earth, *but confeſſed that they were Strangers and Pilgrims.* This was not the language only of the *Shepherd*, whoſe condition had little more fixedneſs than a tent, which is perpetually removed from one place to another; [g] *And Jacob ſaid unto Pharaoh, the days of the years of my Pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years, few and evil have the days of the Years of my life been*; but of the *King* too, [h] *I am a ſtranger with thee, and a ſojourner as all my fathers were*; his dwelling in a Palace, and they in Tents, made no difference in this matter. A Crown had no charms, a Court no pleaſures (or none but what were low and taſteleſs) for him, whoſe heart panted and breathed after a diviner felicity, ſaying, *When ſhall I come and appear before God? In his preſence is fulneſs of joy, at his right hand are pleaſures for evermore.* The good man ſaith as *Job* (but not becauſe broken with ſorrows as he was) [i] *I would not live always*---the wicked man, *Let me never die, ſo I may always live in worldly eaſe and proſperity*---ſo different is the voice of Faith and Senſe, of Grace and Nature.

3. They

[g] Gen. xlvii. 9. [h] Pſal. xxxix. 10. [i] Job. vii. 16.

3. They were not without good hope of a part in the promiſed Reward. To have thought of heaven but as a place which they muſt not ſee, or ſeeing muſt not enter; of God but as one who had caſt them off for ever, would have been inexpreſſibly ſad and afflicting to ſouls that loved God as they did, and had *ſet their affections on things above:* but for this very reaſon, that they loved God ſupremely they could not juſtly entertain a ſuſpicion, that they ſhould be eternally baniſhed from his preſence; for this very reaſon, that the ſuppoſition of ſuch a baniſhment, abſtracting from other conſiderations, alarmed and terrified them, they might be aſſured that it would never be their lot. The [k] *Angles left their own habitation*, τὸ ἴδιον οἰκητήριον, their proper habitation, for ſo it was as long as they continued in their integrity; the purity of the abode ſuited that of their nature, which was no ſooner corrupted by ſin, but the place immediately caſt them out. It may be ſaid of all holy ſouls, that heaven is, though not their native, yet their proper region, to which therefore they as naturally aſcend as a pure and active flame mounts upward. Upon the ſame account as the apoſtate ſpirits were thrown down from theſe celeſtial manſions they ſhall be received into them, filling up the room of thoſe fallen angles, as the *Iſraelites* did of thoſe nations,

[k] Jude. 6.

which the land ſpewed out when they had defiled it. So that you ſee a heavenly hope either actually accompanies a heavenly temper, or always ought to do it. Having thus conſidered the Faith of theſe holy men, which was the Firſt thing propoſed, let us inquire

II. What we are to underſtand by their *Dying in this Faith.* And why may not the expreſſion intimate theſe following things? The conſtancy of their Faith---Its being a ſuitable and decent cloſe of the life they had led---And that it was their main ſupport in dying.

1. This expreſſion of *their dying in Faith*, may be reaſonably ſuppoſed to denote the conſtancy, both of their Faith itſelf which vanquiſhed all the temptations that could be thrown in its way, and of their profeſſion of it which held out to the laſt. They equally abhored infidelity and hypocriſy, neither through error falling from the Faith, nor through cowardice baſely deſerting or diſguiſing or denying it. In them Faith was a lively permanent Principle, which ceaſed not to exert its activity till they themſelves gave up the ghoſt; and then, like thoſe who ſhall be found alive at the laſt day, it did not ſo properly dye as was changed, puting on immortality under another form and name; for the object being preſent, what was *Faith* before

fore immediately commenced *Sight*. The [l] *trial of their Faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried in the fire, was found unto praise and honour and glory*. Of such a Faith as this the house in our Saviour's Parable, that was built upon a Rock, is a proper emblem; [m] *The rains descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon the house, and yet it fell not, because it was founded on a rock. The Foundation of God*, even his holy Covenant, which he had established with them, *standeth sure*; and to this they trusted, so that no storms could shake their Faith, no floods could quench their Love.

The prosperity of wicked men, and the afflictions of the righteous, that deluge of impiety which had over-spread the world, and threatened its destruction, while the God of heaven kept silence, as if he was retired from the scene of action, and regarded not what was done here below; these and such like riddles that were fatal to the Faith of many others, were not so to theirs, who took the matter by the right handle; and instead of considering these things as Objections against the Providence of God, and consequently against a Future State, improved them as very good arguments for such a State, where God will set the affairs of his government in a clearer light, and effectually vindicate

[l] 1 Pet. i. 7. [m] Matt. vii. 25.

dicate his Perfections and Providence from all aſperſions. A great many things conſpired to betray and overthow their Faith, as the number of bad examples which beſet them on all hands, the prevalency of error, the corruption of their own nature, the blandiſhments of ſenſe, the inſinuations of company and acquaintance, the ſophiſtry of Pretenders to Reaſon, and the confidence, the wit, and banter of profane ſcoffers, walking after their own luſts, and ſaying, *Where is the promiſe of his coming? Whoever returned from this inviſible world which you talk ſo much of? Shew us one riſen from the dead and we will believe.* But in vain were all theſe mines and batteries, their Faith after all ſtanding fixed and impregnable; as well it might, when it had not only the ſupport of their natural notions concerning a world to come, but alſo of the power and love and faithfulneſs of God. They endured to the end, and were ſaved; were faithful to the death, and received a crown of life.

2. Their dying in Faith plainly enough hints that their death was but a ſuitable and decent cloſe of the life they had led; it was all of a piece, and all regular, and they had before lived by Faith[n] as they now die in it. Their death, as the laſt act of life, only finiſhed the great work, and ſhowed its unity and perfection. This was not the firſt time

[n] Rom. i. 17.

time of their puting on this celeſtial armor; they always went clad in it, and, by the help of it, had been victorious in manifold encounters. By Faith they pleaſed God, chearfully complied with the command to offer up their beſt loved comforts, choſe to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, rather than injoy the pleaſures of Sin for a ſeaſon, becauſe they had reſpect to the recompence of reward; they ſubdued kingdoms, overcame the world, and, which is yet greater, conquered their own luſts and paſſions, wrought righteouſneſs, became heirs of the promiſes; and, in one word, obtained a good report of men, if they were not bad indeed, and of the truth alſo, which, in the inſpired writings, hath tranſmited their ſhining examples to the moſt diſtant Poſterity. Many will ſay as *Balaam*, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my laſt end be like his*; my death, but not my life. I would willingly injoy my ſinful pleaſures as long as I can, and then try the virtue of Faith. And doſt thou think, O vain man, that the privilege of dying in Faith is reſerved for thee? Or that the Faith, which thou mayeſt have when thou comeſt to leave the world, is the Faith theſe good men died in? O do not thus deceive thyſelf to thy own perdition! True Faith is quite another thing than thou art apt to conceit it, implying ſuch a preference of heavenly

venly things as it is impoſſible thou ſhouldeſt have, after thou haſt minded none but earthly; ſuch a taſte for divine pleaſures, ſuch a reſt and complacency in God, as can never, without a miracle, be found in ſouls, that, for a whole life together, have wallowed in impure and ſenſual delights. Such a change is not often, if ever, wrought in an inſtant. I ſhall only beg you to conſider this further, that it muſt be very odd to think of begining a life of Faith a moment or two before you are to conclude it. To add no more,

3. Hereby is ſignified that Faith was their main ſupport in dying, being able to make the ſame challenge as the Apoſtle *Paul*, and in his words (tho' they could not have underſtood them in the fulneſs of their meaning) *O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory?* And, with exultation, to add, as he does elſewhere, *I have fought the good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the Faith; henceforth a crown of righteouſneſs is laid up for me.* This made it to be no difficulty for them to leave the world, as *Abraham* his country and kindred, having ſo good a guide to conduct them; yet not, as he, to wander in unknown regions, but to enter into everlaſting reſt.

The ſhield of Faith will not only quench the fiery darts of Satan, but repel the arrows

rows of Death too. Never is the worth of this grace ſo ſenſibly diſcerned, as in the ſtrength and peace it communicates to the dying chriſtian, whom (after it hath inabled him to ſurmount the hardſhips and trials of life) it many times elevates above the fears of death too; ſo that he is no more ſhocked at its approach than by that of an ordinary event; a ſight much more pleaſing to a judicious mind than a *Roman* triumph could be. When he is paſſing thro' the dark valley and ſhadow of death, Faith, like a ray from heaven, enlightens the gloomy path, and helps to behold the hills of ſalvation that lie beyond it. We here ſee the waters of *Jordan* divided again by Faith, and the ſoul march dauntleſs thro' to take poſſeſſion of the promiſed reward. [o] *Moſes* was called up to *mount Nebo*, from thence to ſurvey the *land of Canaan*, and then *to die in the mount*; as if, after this ſight, he would die more contentedly: in like manner, the pious man beholding with an eye of Faith the much fairer inheritance in light, calmly reſigns himſelf to the ſtroke of death.

Moſes was to ſee *Canaan* at a diſtance, but never enter it, which would have made this proceeding look more like a puniſhment than a favour, if his generous and publick ſpirit had not given him an intereſt in what ſhould befal the people of God in future ages, and his

[o] Deut. xxxii. 49, &c.

his Faith from the earthly *Canaan* had not raiſed his thoughts to the heavenly, into which he knew he ſhould not be denied admiſſion. O raviſhing proſpect! Unfading light! Rivers of pleaſure! Manſions of reſt! Crowns of glory! Bright and angelick hoſts beholding the Almighty's face, celabrating his perfections and works, ſurrounding his throne, from whence he graciouſly ſmiles on the adoring multitude, and in every ſmile darts ineffable joy into their hearts! This is the place whither the ſpirits of the juſt immediately aſcend, upon their releaſe out of this ſinful life! This the company with which they join! This their imployment and happineſs! And after the revolution of a few years (few compared to the ages of eternity) each Soul ſhall reſume the Body, of which death diſpoſſeſſed it, free from all its old infirmities, arrayed in new and ſurprizing beauty, and inveſted with the utmoſt perfection a Body is capable of.

The Terrors of death muſt flee before this thought, as the ſhades of the night before the riſing day. We may ſay to ſuch as go about to adminiſter conſolation upon any other principles but thoſe of Faith, as *Job* did to his friends, *Miſerable comforters are ye all.* Tell me not that to die is natural and unavoidable, a law that all muſt ſubmit to ſooner or later, whether they will or no—A moſt wonderful comfort under the apprehenſions

henſions of an impending calamity to know that it is inevitable! Tell me not that, of all human evils, Death is the only one, whoſe preſence never incommoded any one, and which makes us uneaſy only by its abſence. This is puting me off with a piece of trifling wit, when I need ſomething more ſolid, and exaſperates, inſtead of healing, a wounded mind. For upon ſuppoſition there be another life after this, this applauded thought hath no manner of foundation; the Soul, which is the only thing ſenſible while the man lives, being no leſs ſenſible after death than before, and the Soul of a wicked man ſenſible of nothing but miſery; and tho' Death ſhould be ſuch an evil as it is here deſcribed, it is but a thin and ſorry fence this againſt the fears of it. The evils of life, if they are felt, argue ſenſe and perception which is the foundation of happineſs; while Death, together with the ſenſe of itſelf, if it implies annihilation, deſtroys all capacity of pleaſure or happineſs too. * Tell me not again, that tho' the time of life appointed to all be ſhort and irrevocable, yet it is in a man's power to extend his memory by virtuous deeds. If the Poet's God had nothing to offer more conſolatory than this, I muſt ſay that his God is not as our God, who only

* Stat ſua cuique dies, breve & irreparabile tempus
Omnibus eſt vitæ; ſed famam extendere factis,
Hoc virtutis opus. *Virg. Æneid. Lib.* 10.

only hath immortality, and, by his well-beloved Son Jesus Christ, hath given us the words of eternal life; who does not only incourage us with the promise that the just shall be had in everlasting remembrance, but that they themselves shall live for ever in a state of unconceivable perfection. And, in truth, unless I have some rational assurance of this, that I myself shall have a real, sensible, happy existence, it will yield me but little relief that my name is likely to be somewhat longer lived than this frail body; since if it should so happen that I am well spoken of by a few when I am no more, I shall know nothing of it, and be never the better for it, and so can have no injoyment of the imaginary blessing but by way of anticipation. To these, and such like heathenish methods of encountering the terrors of Death may justly be applied those words of the Prophet *Isaiah*, *The covering is narrower than that a man can wrap himself in it.* Let who will please themselves with talking of a Philosophical Death, may I die like a Christian. Let them trust to natural Reason and Resolution, but, O Lord, do thou give me Faith! Let this angel comfort me in my dying agonies, and I matter them not. Faith will prop my languishing head, dispel the mists from my clouded eyes, quicken my feeble pulse, and revive my sinking spirits; the richest cordial in nature cannot compare with it.

When

When my ſtrength and my heart fails me, this will be the ſtrength of my heart, by aſſuring me, that God will be my portion for ever. O let me be but ſtrong in Faith when my body lies weak and helpleſs, and dying! As my end approaches let me have brighter views, and more overflowing hopes of heavenly joys, and I defy the worſt that death can do. I am ready to enter the liſt when God pleaſeth, and ſhall write down my laſt day as that whereon I am to triumph.

And now to make a little uſe of what hath been delivered.

1. I infer the ſingular excellency of Faith. For, not to mention any other trial of it, it is abundantly enough that it will ſtand this laſt and greateſt. Let the infidel bring his vaunted principles to the teſt, and ſee if they will bear it. Faith may paſs for weakneſs and folly among ſome men, but they muſt give others leave to think it a point of the higheſt wiſdom: nay, I will undertake to prove it ſo upon the grand principle of theſe men, *That there is no life to come.*

For argument's ſake I ſuppoſe there is not; how will the account then ſtand between the believer and the unbeliever? Why, when they are dead they will both be upon a level, but not when they are dying. No, here the believer hath vaſtly the advantage; for, beſides that the other, in ſpite of all his indeavours to the contrary, cannot but have

ſome jealouſies of a future reckoning, which will keep his mind penſive and anxious; his beſt, his only reſort is annihilation, or the wretched hope that he ſhall be no more, that he ſhall intirely periſh; which is juſt like a man's throwing himſelf into a rapid flood, from which there is no poſſibility of his geting out again, to avoid a cruel enemy that purſues him; he chuſes Death in this form only, as leſs dreadful than falling into ſuch mercileſs hands. This is the condition of the *free-thinker*, (as he loves to call himſelf) diſmal you ſee at the beſt; while at the worſt (I do not mean for the former) the *believer* hath the ſupport of his Faith, which, if it were an error, is yet ſufficient to ſcatter the fears of Death. But now, if there be another life, (and we may be as certain of it as of any thing which we cannot ſee) what then is become of our boaſter? He is miſerable by his own confeſſion; while the believer, the good man, is beyond expreſſion happy, compleatly and eternally happy. And would any one but a moſt egregious fool try ſuch a dangerous experiment, and ingage in a game of hazard, at which he muſt ſtake all againſt nothing?

2. The examples of theſe antient ſervants of God ſhould ſtir us up to an imitation of their Faith, both living and dying. Their Faith is indeed a great confirmation of ours, and accordingly this is the uſe which this

ſacred

ſacred writer himſelf makes of what he had ſaid, in the firſt verſe of the following chapter; *Wherefore, ſeeing we alſo are compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes, let us lay aſide every weight, and the ſin that doth ſo eaſily beſet us, and run with patience the race that is ſet before us.* God hath had his witneſſes in all ages of the world, in the earlier as well as the later, who have born their teſtimony to the wiſdom of his ways, and the faithfulneſs of his promiſes, as he alſo hath teſtified of their gifts and graces, that they were ſincere and well pleaſing in his ſight. This teſtimony of their lives is a conſiderable help to our Faith in theſe perilous times, and the teſtimony of their Death, perhaps, a ſtill greater.

Let us do likewiſe, let us live as they did, that we may die like them. We have the advantage of them many ways. We cannot ſay, *that ſince the fathers fell aſleep, all things continue as they were*; the Meſſiah, or Chriſt, is ſince come, and hath told us all things, to whom we ſhould look as the author and finiſher of our Faith, who hath brought life and immortality to light by the Goſpel, hath both inlarged our proſpect, and made it more clear and diſtinct. [p] We ſee heaven opened, and Jeſus ſtanding at the right hand of God, to animate his faithful combatants, and receive their ſpirits when commended

[p] John iv. 25. xi. 25. Heb. xii. 2. 2 Tim. x. 12.

into his hands. We know whom we believe, that he is able to keep what we commit unto him; *He is the reſurrection and the life.*

In the *Goſpel* of Chriſt we have moſt expreſs promiſes of the heavenly country, and a kind of a map or delineation of it. In the *Blood* of Chriſt we have the price of the inheritance, a price equal in value to the poſſeſſion purchaſed with it; inſomuch, that be the expected bleſſedneſs never ſo great, and the expectant, in his own apprehenſions, and in reality, never ſo unworthy of it, if he unfeignedly love Chriſt, he cannot reaſonably doubt of his attaining it. In the *Reſurrection* and *Aſcenſion* of Chriſt we have an example of the reſurrection and conſummation of the juſt, *whoſe vile bodies he will faſhion like to his glorious body, by that mighty power whereby he is able to ſubdue all things unto himſelf.* In the *Spirit* of Chriſt we have a moſt ineſtimable pledge and earneſt of the glory promiſed. The church is bleſſed with larger effuſions of the divine Spirit, and clearer manifeſtations of the divine will; beſides the liſt of their primitive ſaints, we have a new roll of chriſtian heroes, and by a long ſucceſſion of excellent perſons, before and ſince the Goſpel, who have exhibited the truth in their lives, and ſealed it with their dying breath, and ſometimes with their blood, are ſilently reproached with our ſloth, our worldlineſs, our puſillanimity and unbelief. O

Sirs,

Sirs, let us be ambitious of joining ourſelves to this glorious army, headed by Chriſt the captain of our ſalvation, and follow their Faith, remembering the end of their converſation.

Of this number was your *Deceaſed Paſtor*; *He died in Faith*, and we have ground to hope is now inheriting the promiſes. The laſt words he ſpake, or aimed to ſpeak, were thoſe in the cloſe of the fourth chapter of the firſt Epiſtle to the *Theſſalonians*, *Comfort one another with theſe words*, namely, *That ye ſorrow not, even as others who have no hope; for if we believe that Jeſus died, and roſe again, even ſo them alſo that ſleep in Jeſus, will God bring with him: for this we ſay unto you, that we that are alive, and remain to the coming of the Lord, ſhall not prevent them that are aſleep; for the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt: then we that are alive and remain, ſhall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord.*

A great diſorder of body made the latter part of his life, as leſs comfortable to himſelf, ſo leſs uſeful to others, than, I am perſwaded, it would otherwiſe have been. The ſoul, let it be never ſo well diſpoſed, can but badly perform its part, when the body

hangs upon it like a dead weight, clouds its luſtre, and impairs its vigor. I will not ſay that *charity* obliges us to makes allowances in ſuch caſes, ſince it is but a piece of juſtice that we owe worthy men, to overlook their decays for the ſake of thoſe good fruits, which the world and the church reaped from their labours and examples, in their more flouriſhing time—His miniſterial qualifications will be acknowledged by thoſe that knew him, and are competent judges, to have exceeded the common rate. To good and natural abilities he had added a conſiderable ſtock of acquired learning, which he amaſſed together with unwearied pains and diligence; and tho' it may be ſaid that he was *covetous* in geting knowledge, (yet contrary to what is obſerved in other caſes, where *covetouſneſs* is a vice) he was altogether as free in communicating it. His happy talents for the inſtructing and forming of *Youth* committed to his care, and the delight he took in this work, while he could delight much in any thing, many, I hope, recollect with a grateful pleaſure—his treaſure of ſcripture knowledge, out of which, as a ſcribe well inſtructed to the kingdom of heaven, he brought forth things new and old — his ſerious pathetick and judicious way of preaching, equally adapted to thoſe of higher and of meaner capacities, you of this *Congregation* had too long the benefit of not to obſerve; and, give me

me leave to add, too long to be excuſable, if you made no improvement under them.

Among the virtues of our departed Friend, I cannot forbear makeing particular mention of *three* or *four*, both becauſe he viſibly excelled in them, and they are equally fit to be propoſed to the imitation of all. The virtues I mean, are the ſimplicity and openneſs of his temper—his contempt of the world—his unenvious, catholick and chriſtian ſpirit—and his active zeal in doing good. Theſe are all moſt amiable qualities, (*graces* we may call them, when they are the fruits of Faith, as in this ſervant of God) and, I am ſorry to ſay it, are more valuable, like ſome other things, for being rare. He was an *Iſraelite indeed, in whom was no guile*, without artifice and deſign, both in his preaching and converſation, in which, as St. *Paul* was his pattern, ſo he copied him very exactly; [q] *Our rejoicing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our converſation in the world.* And in the fourth chapter of the ſame Epiſtle, verſe 2. *We have renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty, not walking in craftineſs, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifeſtation of the truth, commending ourſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God.*

[q] 2 Cor. i. 12.

In an intimate acquaintance of many years, I cannot call to mind any one inſtance that diſcovered an inclination in him to methods of *tricking* and *deceit*. If it be objected, that a man may have too much *ſimplicity* for this world; my anſwer is, better ſo than have too little for another. He had as hearty, and thorough an indifference to the world, as moſt I have known. Did St. *Paul* in his appeal to the elders of *Epheſus* publickly declare that *he had coveted no man's ſilver or gold?* Our friend could have done the ſame, knowing no other uſe of money, than to ſupply the real occaſions of life, and to expend in charity and beneficence.

How free was he from that baſe, unmanly, unjuſt, and yet natural, paſſion of *envy?* Eaſy to hear others commended, and pleaſed to have an occaſion of praiſing them himſelf. In this, I muſt confeſs, I have not often met with his equal. He was far from confining chriſtianity to a *party*, as the manner of ſome is; he had larger and juſter notions of it; and tho' he would *call no man maſter upon earth*, he was ready to call and account all thoſe his *brethren*, that appeared to be imbarked in the ſame common deſign of promoting the Goſpel of Chriſt, and ſaving ſouls. This, indeed, ſeemed to be his chief delight; he ſerved God with his ſpirit in the Goſpel of his Son. We have reaſon to think that as long as his health would

would give leave, he was never better pleaſed, than when he was about his maſter's buſineſs and imitating that divine perſon, who went about doing good, and made it his meat to do the will of him that ſent him, and to finiſh his work. But, alas, after having for ſome time been preparing us for his loſs, God hath at length taken him from us, almoſt in the midſt of his days; ſo that ye, among whom he went preaching the kingdom of God, and all of us, ſhall ſee his face no more. It remains therefore, that the things which ye have learned and received, and heard, and ſeen in him, agreeable to our common ſtandard of *Faith* and *practice*, ye remember and do; that ſo, tho' he be dead, and in his grave, the ſeed he ſowed may not die with him, but ſpring up, and bring forth fruit to eternal life.

The Thoughts and Purposes of men broken off by Death.

A

SERMON,

Occasioned by the Death of

Mr. *Samuel Darch*,

IN THE

XXII. Year of his Age.

1725.

SERMON V.

The Purposes of Men broken off by Death.

JOB XVII. 11.

My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart.

THESE words signify the apprehensions of afflicted *Job*, that the end of his time was approaching, and with that the period of all his Thoughts and Designs with regard to this world. That by *his Days*, which he speaks of *as past*, he does not mean only the days of his prosperity, but of his life, is evident from his complaint in the first verse, *My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me:* and so again from the thirteenth verse to the end of the Chapter. *If I wait, the grave is my house. I have made my bed in the darkness. I have said to corruption, thou art my father, to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister*, &c. He thought, (though the event shewed him to be

be miſtaken) that Death was juſt at hand, which, as it would be the concluſion of all his miſeries, ſo would likewiſe defeat him of all the ſchemes and purpoſes he once pleaſed himſelf with, and the hopes which, in caſe of longer life, he might be tempted to entertain of brighter days behind. If there be any difference between Purpoſes and Thoughts in the Text, it is this, that though every Purpoſe implies Thought, yet every Thought cannot be called a Purpoſe. A man's Purpoſes relate to his own actions, to this or that which he intends to do; his Thoughts are imployed about the various events that may befal him, things out of his power, as well as things which he conceives to be in it; as to all which, he is full of thought, when he looks upon them as affecting his chief intereſt and happineſs. Perhaps, the original word for *Thoughts* (which literally tranſlated ſignifies the poſſeſſions of the heart) hath a more particular regard to the hopes of men; our hopes giving us a kind of anticipated enjoyment of the things hoped for, which, how long ſoever it be before we really poſſeſs them, yea, whether we ever poſſeſs them or not, may be reckoned among the poſſeſſions of the heart, or imagination: the mind ſeizeth upon ſuch things as its own property, and rejoyceth in them as if they were preſent. So that, the words afford us this following Doctrine, which, though a moſt

a moſt obvious and important truth, is not ſo duly weighed and conſidered as it ought to be, namely that

Death puts an end to all the Thoughts and Purpoſes of mortal men.

Here I ſhall indeavour to ſhew,

I. What theſe Thoughts and Purpoſes of mortal men uſually are.
II. How Death puts an end to them.
III. What Improvement we ought to make of this point.

I. I ſhall briefly conſider what theſe Thoughts and Purpoſes of mortal men uſually are. The ſuperiority of man to other living creatures here below appears, among many things in this, that while they are confined to the preſent moment, having no perception but of what immediately ſtrikes their ſenſes, he intereſts himſelf in times paſt and to come; runing his Thoughts backward and forward to an indeterminate extent: his mind, which is an image of the Creator, hath a kind of infinity in its capacities, its deſires and imaginations, diffuſing itſelf over the boundleſs dimenſions of time and ſpace. This, by the way, is a plain argument that both the paſt and future time concern us after another manner than they do the beaſts of the field; ſince our Maker hath given us faculties for converſing with paſt and future things, which they have not.

It

It is the office of Conſcience to take a review of our actions paſt, and, according as they have been good or bad, agreeable to the obligations of duty, or otherwiſe, to pronounce a ſuitable judgment upon them: as it is further the part of Prudence, from the obſervations we have made of paſt events, to frame ſuch rules as may be of uſe to us in our future conduct; avoiding all thoſe actions and methods of life that we have found prejudicial to the repoſe of our minds, and our true intereſt, and purſuing others which we have experienced, or ſeen, to have a contrary effect. And as the paſt, ſo the future time falls within every man's province. Nor is this our fault, that we meddle with things future, or ſtretch our cares beyond their proper bounds, ſince being deſigned for immortality, that is, to live for ever, and to live for ever happy or miſerable, anſwerable to our behaviour in a ſtate of trial, we cannot be blamed if we are thoughtful about this grand event, and ſollicitous to provide for a ſtate of life which will be unalterable. It is not often that we exceed here.

Our unhappineſs and folly is, that we think too little about a life to come, and too much about what is to come; or rather may be, or not be to come, of this life. Inſtead of carrying our thoughts and deſigns too far into futurity, we do not, in ſome ſenſe, carry them far enough; we generally limit them to

to this frail body, this vain world, and momentary life; or, which is not a whit leſs ſilly, to an imaginary exiſtence that hath no connection with this life or another. And here, indeed, we are too buſy both for our own peace, and that of others too; taken up with the thoughts of what we ſhall eat and drink, and where withal we ſhall be cloathed; with forming projects and deſigns for a happy life (according to our miſtaken notions of happineſs) and about a thouſand things, which will never exiſt any where but in our own brains.

It my be proper to conſider the *Thoughts* and *Purpoſes* of men a little diſtinctly, without ſcrupulouſly following the order of the Text. I chuſe to begin with *Thoughts*.--- The inward thought of too many is, not only that their houſes ſhall continue forever, and their dwelling places to all generations, but that they themſelves have many days and years to come, a great part of their appointed time upon earth, unwilling to ſuppoſe it in the leaſt probable that they muſt die this Month, or this Year; or when they are entered upon another, that that may prove their laſt; and thus do they ſuffer their time to ſlide away, never makeing a good uſe of the conſideration of their *laſt Day*, becauſe they put it far from them, viewing it through that end of the proſpective, which repre-

ſents it at a much greater diſtance than really it is.

This is more eſpecially the way of the Young, in whoſe account the thoughts and meditations of Death are utterly unſeaſonable. Let thoſe think of Death who can take no pleaſure in life, who have the ſnow of age upon their heads, and their blood frozen in their veins; or, by ſome hopeleſs diſeaſe and buſineſs of the world, are bid to prepare for their approaching end; as for their parts, they are but juſt entred upon the world, and find ſomething elſe to do than to think preſently of going out of it again; they are ſcarce ſat down to the banquet, and will not ſpoil the merriment by idle fears, that they may be obliged to riſe, before they are half ſatisfied. The world courts them with its pleaſures, and they are now in an age to injoy them; they are in the prime and vigor of their days, and may be allowed to promiſe themſelves longer life, when it is no more than the health and ſtrength of their conſtitutions promiſe them. They live in a houſe new built, and, it may be, ſtronger than ordinary, and why then ſhould they fright themſelves with an imagination that it may fall upon their heads, and bury them in its ruins? It is true, there is no houſe ſecure if an earthquake or raging fire ſhould happen; notwithſtanding which, the owner of a houſe that is well built, and in

good

good repair, quietly injoys the profit, or the pleaſure of it without diſtracting himſelf about the poſſibility. Fooliſh man, to take refuge in ſuch a compariſon, as if the accidents that lie in wait for mens lives did not occur a thouſand times oftner than thoſe, which overthrow or conſume their habitations. Surely the materials of a building are not nigh ſo brittle as thoſe of a human body, nor does its continuance depend upon ſuch a multitude of nice and exquiſite parts, either of which failing, the whole ſtructure falls to the ground. Rather therefore when we are talking of life, let us reſemble it to a light and ſlender veſſel, ſailing on a dangerous ſea; perhaps it is finely painted, and makes a gawdy ſhow, and, for ſome time, hath a proſperous courſe, dancing upon the calm ocean, or flying before the wind, when of a ſudden, it ſtrikes againſt an unſeen rock, or meets with a tempeſt that overwhelms it in the deep. Is it not ſtrange now that we ſhould rely upon ſo weak a bottom? Youth by this means deceives the unwary poſſeſſor; and health, which in itſelf is an unſpeakable bleſſing, becomes a moſt fatal ſnare. The compariſon of a houſe, before mentioned, fails too in another reſpect. The houſe thou makeſt thy boaſt of is not thine, neither haſt thou a term of years in it; and therefore let the houſe be what it will, ſince thou art liable to be turned out of it at the plea-

ſure of the lord, it is a great folly to make as ſure of thy continuing in it, as if there was a contract between thee and the proprietor.

You will ſay, there are thoſe who live to a much greater age than you have yet attained to. But how many more fall ſhort of the term you propoſe? Life is a kind of Lottery, wherein, for one Prize, there is a great number of Blanks; and each perſon having but a ſingle Ticket to depend on, what a vanity is it to boaſt ourſelves of a Prize; which, it is many to one odds, will not fall to us. In reaſon therefore we ought to place ourſelves among the generality of mankind, who tarry but a ſhort time on the Stage; whereas, our practice is to paſs over the examples of a ſhort life, as little concerning us, though ſo numerous; and fixing our eye on a few rare inſtances to the contrary, to work ourſelves into a belief that we likewiſe ſhall be Exceptions from the general Rule.

Another Thought to which men indulge, more eſpecially in the morning of life, is of the happy times they ſhall ſee, the delightful ſcenes that lie before them, the proſperity and ſucceſs that will attend them, and crown all their wiſhes; how much their circumſtances will be mended, their wealth increaſed, their eſtate and their name inlarged, and, with theſe, their ability of compaſſing

ing all their desires. They first think these things may be; next hope; and presently after assure themselves that they will; as if their time was in their own hands, and the whole train of events that shall befal them in that time. Not that men are forbidden to hope the best concerning their condition, if so be they prepare for the worst. Life unanimated with hope, would be a dull and heavy entertainment, a burthen instead of a pleasure, especially under great afflictions; for which reason they, that are exercised with such, are permited to hope that they shall see the clouds blow over, and injoy a calmer and a brighter season. This, without doubt, is lawful, in case they do not limit the Providence of God as to the time and manner of their deliverance, nor depend upon an alteration in their condition as a thing certain, nor make the hope of it their main stay and refreshment in adversity.

He that would be inconsolable, were it not for the hope he hath that his troubles will end before his life, shews himself to be a stranger to the Principles of the Gospel, and to divine consolations. But what Reason and Religion condemn is, the fond imagination that our cup will perpetually overflow with joy and pleasure, giving ourselves up to a fantastick dream of Paradise upon earth, and forgeting that we are sinful, mutable, and mortal. This argues a sensual heart, that

hath no taste, no notion, of any other than a worldly felicity. O how tempting doth the world appear to a youthful fancy! How charming are all its prospects! Most Young Persons, that have a provision made for them, pass their lives under a kind of enchantment, counting upon nothing else but ease and pleasure, and injoyment of themselves, and of the world.

Objects viewed through a coloured glass appear of the same colour as the glass. Thus life, and the things of life are as the imagination of the man that beholds them. To a dark and gloomy imagination, the world hath nothing in it that is joyous and delightsome, a perpetual cloud dwells upon the face of it; while the gay, the sanguine imagination (and such the imaginations of Young Persons generally are) makes all things about us look gay and smiling. Ah flattering Youth, how many thousands hast thou undone by thy soothing softness, thy romantick hopes and expectations! Wisdom cries aloud, *it is all delusion*, but not loud enough to be heard in the noise and tumult of the passions. Well therefore might the Royal Preacher pronounce, *That* [a] *Youth is Vanity*, vain are its hopes and imaginations; so vain that the visions of one in a delirium are scarcely vainer. And if it be true of man in general that [b] *he walketh in a vain shew*, much more

[a] Eccles. xi. 10. [b] Psal. xxxix. 6.

more is it so of the Young. Youth is vain in another respect, or in the same sense that all things here below are vain. It frequently deceives the great expectations which it had raised. If a Young Person hath, by his good temper and behaviour, ingaged the affections of his acquaintance, and bids fair to be a blessing in his Place, his Parents and Kindred are presently apt to promise themselves a great deal of comfort in him; the Poor think what a good master he will prove, and all that know him how useful he is likely to be in every relation. Vain hopes, which are in a moment blasted by Death! He dies, and together with his own thoughts, there is an end of all the pleasing hopes which others built on his life.

These then are some of the thoughts of men, who commonly reckon upon a long life, and that they shall spend it all in pleasure.

And what now are their Purposes? As may be expected, much like their thoughts; as uncertain in their foundation, as foolish in their nature, and fruitless in their issue. Our Purposes do either concern another life, or are circumscribed by the present. As for those of our Purposes that terminate on a life to come, God knows they are few enough, such as we are forced upon, and, which is worse, are seldom in haste to make good. If conscience will not let us alone without it,

why then, for peace sake, we give it a few good words and fair promises; and commonly they prove no more than words. We promise, we resolve to act a wiser part, to apply ourselves in good earnest to the pleasing and serving of God, and the care of our immortal souls. But when is this to be? Alas, we either fix no time, or a time so distant that it is much if ever we arive to it; or so improper (as for instance, a time of sickness) that we are not like to be in any manner of fitness for the work which we have allotted it.

There are those, who intend to be publick blessings by their Zeal, their Liberality and Charity; they will relieve the indigent, incourage the worthy, and generously contribute to the promoting of a good cause; but then this is not to be till they have discharged the expence of certain Undertakings, and have made large preparations for it, though already they want nothing but the heart. After this manner do we deal with the few scattered resolves which we take for the repose of our consciences. And it were well if we were as slack and dilatory in executing some other Purposes of a contrary nature. Too often the lusts and passions of men put them upon wicked designs and enterprizes, in accomplishing which they are as quick and vigorous as in respect of the former they are slow. Ah, why should we misplace our activity;

activity; and have our hearts, which ought to burn with zeal for God and the good of our fellow-creatures, fully ſet in us to do evil? Other projects there are of an indifferent nature, of which ſome men receive a ſwarm into their heads, and hug themſelves in the imagination that there is no danger or harm in them: they plant, they build, they pull down, they alter this and that, they frame ſchemes for themſelves and families. But now, though theſe contrivances are in themſelves indifferent, they may yet be of pernicious conſequence through the abuſe of them, as ſhall be ſhewn in the Application. Of all our projects thoſe are moſt unaccountably abſurd, which ſet by matters of preſent and neceſſary concern, to take in a long hereafter, as if life were not meaſured by Years, but by ages---*Vitæ ſumma brevis ſpem nos vetat inchoare longam*---Men ſend their view into diſtant futurities, and over-look the precipice that lies juſt before them; which brings me in the next place to conſider,

II. How Death puts at end to all our Thoughts and Purpoſes.

Death doth not extinguiſh our thinking faculty, it is impoſſible it ſhould; its empire reacheth no further than the body, which it diſſolves and crumbles into its native duſt: the ſoul is of a nobler nature,

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as well as of a diviner original, and though it makes use of the organs and members of the body as instruments to act by, can yet think, and know, perceive pleasure and pain, be happy or miserable, without them. The flesh is little more than the garment of the mind. We must not therefore imagine that Death is a state of absolute forgetfulness and inactivity. Nor further, must we understand what is advanced in the doctrine of Death's puting an end to human Purposes, as if our useful and pious designs, which are left unfinished only for want of opportunity to reduce them into act, were perfectly lost at Death. The good man may come short of his aim, but not of his reward. As no virtuous action of his, not the least service he does God and Religion shall be overlooked, so neither any commendable design, which, by that God who calleth things that be not, as if they were, shall be placed to his account after the same manner as what is actually accomplished. [c] *Abraham* is said *to have offered up his Son Isaac*, because he that knows the heart, knew he would have done it, if by his Angel he had not prevented him; for which cause he accepts of the intended Sacrifice, and swears by himself *that in blessing he would bless him*, that is, he would surely and exceedingly bless him. In like manner, Death many times intercepts the Purposes

[c] Heb. vii. 11.

poſes of a devout and zealous heart, but inſtead of intercepting the recompence doth only haſten it---To the queſtion, How then are we to underſtand the Doctrine? I anſwer,

1. Death puts a ſtop to the execution of all our Thoughts and Purpoſes in this world, of whatſoever kind they are. The deſigns of men, when Death comes, are like a building which is begun upon a large and expenſive plan, but will never be finiſhed. [d] *His breath goeth forth, he returneth to the earth, in that very day his Thoughts periſh*; all his Thoughts and Contrivances for the preſent life, or about ſuch things as were to have been done in this life. [e] *The dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgoten: alſo their love and their hatred and their envy are now periſhed; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the ſun*; what is done under the ſun, or upon this earth, is no more to them than if it was done in a place which they never knew. And ſo again in the tenth verſe of the ſame Chapter, *Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the Grave whether thou goeſt.* No, it is all ſilence and oblivion there, and all beyond is fixed and unchangeable. [f] *I ſhall behold*

[d] Pſalm cxlvi. 4. [e] Eccleſ. ix. 5, 6.
[f] Iſai. xxxviii. 11, 12.

behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. Mine age is departed, and is removed from me like a shepherd's tent. I have cut off, like a weaver, my life: and when life is once cut off, there is no piecing it again. The tree whose fruits do not ripen kindly one year, may be more fortunate and useful the next, and with loaden branches more than pay for the last year's barrenness; not so man, who hath but one Season for Fruit; sometimes longer, sometimes shorter, and knows no second Spring. His Purposes and Hopes are like the blossoms on the tree, or immature fruit; Death not only nips and withers these, but fells the tree that it never bears any more. [g] *There is hope of a tree if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and the tender branch thereof will not cease; but man dieth and wasteth away, yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?* And where all his intended Regulations, and plausible Schemes? Buried with him in one Grave.

2. Death so intirely destroys the Thoughts and Resolutions of men to prepare for a future state, which they might have put in execution, but never did, that they will no way profit them in another life. Will good works cloath the naked; or fill the hungry? No more will good, but ineffective wishes save a guilty perishing soul. There is

[g] Job xiv. 7, 10.

is no virtue in reſolving well, without doing what is in the power of our hands to do; and as for all ſuch empty reſolutions Death will ſcatter them as the chaff is diſperſed and driven away by the tempeſt, their place ſhall no more be found, they ſhall not be admited in plea at the dreadful tribunal, but rather ſerve to prove our guilt, and aggravate our ſentence; ſince by reſolving upon the amendment of our lives, we plainly confeſs, that we think it our duty to amend them, and are therefore inexcuſable in not doing it. The Sum is, the man who is never actually good, muſt never hope to be actually happy.

3. Death ſometimes breaks off the Thoughts and Purpoſes of men of a ſudden, and unexpectedly. Like a thread that hath a weak or rotten place in it, life ſnaps aſunder before they are aware of it. This hath been the caſe of ſome, who have made no little noiſe in the world. I ſhall content myſelf with producing two inſtances of it, one out of ſacred, the other from common Hiſtory.

Belſhazzer will be an eternal example of what I am now proving, as you have his hiſtory in the fifth Chapter of *Daniel*, where you read of *his making a great feaſt to a thouſand of his Lords, and with his Princes, his Wives, and his Concubines, drinking wine in the golden and ſilver veſſels, which his father* Nebuchadnezzar *had taken out of the temple at*

at Jeruſalem, *praiſing his Gods of gold and ſilver, of braſs, of iron, of wood, and of ſtone.* Thus did he lift up himſelf againſt the Lord of Heaven, and refuſe *to glorify the God in whoſe hand his breath was, and whoſe were all his ways*; he prided himſelf in his power and greatneſs, and thought his mountain ſo ſtrong that it could not be moved. With good reaſon might it be ſaid *of ſuch a Laughter that it was mad*; and of *ſuch Mirth what doth it?* For in the ſame hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over-againſt the candleſtick, upon the plaiſter of the wall of the King's Palace---*MENE, MENE, TEKEL UPHARSIN--God hath numbered thy Kingdom and finiſhed it*, &c. *And in that night was* Belſhazzar *King of the Caldeans ſlain.* Read this, and (as he did,) tremble. Though no hand writing appear on the wall, yet know *your days are numbered*, and may be now drawing to a cloſe.

Julius Cæſar ſhall be the other Inſtance. The * Hiſtorian having enumerated ſeveral of the great things which he was revolving in his mind, ſuch as the repairing and beautifying the City of *Rome*, inlarging the Empire, reforming the Civil Law, and the like, adds, *Talia agentem et meditantem mors prævenit.*---while he was meditating and forecaſting theſe things Death prevented him, and this by a moſt ſurpriſing blow: this ambitious

* Suetonius.

bitious man, this idol of the multitude, one minute preſiding in the ſenate, the next weltering in his blood. Perſons in the lower ſtations of life, not liable to ſuch violent and tragical ends, are not exempted from unforeſeen turns and changes. Their deſigns, inconſiderable as they are in themſelves, and when compared with thoſe of men in high places, are yet conſiderable to them, and when cut off by an untimely Death, occaſion the ſame mournful reflections among thoſe of their own rank and condition. What a ſad diſappointment is Death both to them and their friends! They looked for light, and behold darkneſs; night ruſhes in upon them at once, overtakes their day of life in the begining or middle of its courſe, and ſo cloſes up the ſcene for ever. But as theſe things are too plain to need much enlargement, let us proceed,

III. To conſider the improvement we ought to make of this point. And, O what a change ſhould it produce in our Thoughts and Purpoſes! What a mighty, what a conſtant influence ſhould it have upon them, to conſider that Death puts an end to them all as to this world. Indeed, were we to live always in this world, and never to be judged; or were there no other world beſides this, were we never to die, or to die as the beaſts do, without the leaſt probable expecta-

tion

tion of an after-life, we ſhould then have no great occaſion to be ſolicitous about our imaginations and deſigns; any further than as prudence ſhould reſtrain us from ſuch as were hurtful to ourſelves, and humanity and common juſtice from thoſe that were hurtful to others. With the exception of ſuch fooliſh or miſchievous thoughts, we might freely abandon ourſelves to all others, and regard nothing elſe but the amuſing our minds, and gratifying our inclinations.

Upon the ſuppoſition now made, it would be our wiſdom to ſtudy our diverſion and pleaſure; this alone makeing our deſigns accountable enough to our reaſon, that we were to give no account of them to a higher tribunal; there would be no harm then in ſpending our years as a tale, or as a dream, ſo it was but a pleaſant one. But the caſe is quite otherwiſe than it is here put. As certainly as we now live, we muſt all die; and as certainly as we die, we muſt live again; yea, as to one, and that the chief part of us, ſhall not ceaſe to live, but exiſt in a ſeparate ſtate, where we ſhall reap the fruits of our wiſe, or fooliſh, our virtuous, or vitious conduct in the body. And who ſees not that this ſets things in quite another view? So that what was juſtifiable on the former foot, cannot be ſo eſteemed upon this. Since Death implies the deſtruction of all our

our Deſigns and Reſolutions in the manner before explained, we ſhould entertain none but ſuch as are innocent and reaſonable; we ſhould exerciſe a great deal of caution even as to theſe, that what is innocent and reaſonable in itſelf, do not become otherwiſe through our fault; and, finally, as to our good, eſpecially our religious Purpoſes, we ſhould not poſtpone and delay them.

1. We ſhould entertain none but innocent and reaſonable Toughts and Purpoſes. By innocent ones, I mean ſuch as have nothing of *moral evil* in them; not neceſſarily interfering with the commands of the firſt or ſecond table, with the duties of piety we owe our maker, of juſtice and charity that we owe our fellow-creatures, or of ſobriety and temperance that we owe to ourſelves. When I ſay that they ought to be *reaſonable*, my meaning is, that they ſhould be ſuch as ſuit our birth and education, our ſtate and circumſtances of life, our faculties and opportunities, and rational proſpects. [h] *We muſt not exerciſe ourſelves in great matters, or in things too high for us*; things not in our ſphere, and beyond our line, that lie too remote in time; or out of our reach; or ſuch as are impracticable, and afford no probable advantage if we ſucceed in them. It is a part of the character, which the Hiſtorian draws of a very bad man,* that his

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[h] Pſal. cxxxi. 1.

* Vaſtus animus immoderata incredibilia, nimis alta ſemper cupiebat. *Salluſt. Catal.*

vaſt ſoul was always aiming at things immoderate, incredible and too lofty. Do not, ſaith another, † let thy hopes rove after things immortal; the changing year, and flying hour admoniſh thee to be wiſer; what is immortal can never be brought within the limits of mortal life, nor what implies a long duration within the bounds of a ſhort life; though if we remove the ſcene into another life, it is certain our ſouls cannot ſoar too high, nor extend their hopes too far. Such idle fooliſh projects as thoſe I have now deſcribed, will be like ſhooting at the moon, or at game that is not worth looking after. I believe there is not one of us, who would willingly have Death ſurprize him thus imployed, ingaged in criminal or chimerical undertakings. Is this a poſture, a circumſtance, for a reaſonable and immortal creature to be found in? Is it thus we would go out of the world, having our heads and hearts filled with wild imaginations, evil intentions, and ſhameful affections.

2. It is our wiſdom and duty to exerciſe a great deal of caution even with regard to our innocent and reaſonable Purpoſes, that what is innocent and reaſonable in itſelf, may not become otherwiſe through ſome faulty circumſtance attending it. Our thoughts may be innocent enough in their own nature, but we

† Immortalia ne ſperes, monet, annus, et almum,
Quæ rapit hora diem. *Hor.*

we ſhall be far from innocent, if we ſuffer them to ingroſs the whole attention of our minds, and have no room left for the more important concerns of religion. It is altogether reaſonable that we ſhould conſult meaſures for the welfare of the body, and of the preſent life, the body being a part of ourſelves, and this life of our intire exiſtence; but if our concern be only, or chiefly for the body and the preſent life, it is extremely unreaſonable. We ſhould preſerve ſome equitable proportion between our merely innocent Purpoſes, and thoſe that are laudable and virtuous, that all, or almoſt all, our Purpoſes may not be ſuch as reaſon barely tolerates, ſingly taken, but ſuch as it approves in reſpect of their number, and, as to their uſefulneſs, even requires.

A reaſonable creature cannot be ſaid to think and purpoſe reaſonably, if his Thoughts and Purpoſes are not imployed about ſome worthy end of life, ſuch as the Glory of God, and ſerviceableneſs in his proper place and ſtation; and do not, in their final reſult, look towards a future everlaſting world, ſince there is ſuch a world, and we are deſigned for it. Again, we may not only be faulty in not rightly proportioning our Thoughts, but in makeing too ſure of the iſſue, or puting the peace and quiet of our ſouls upon it. We think, and project, but with whom, I pray, is the diſpoſal of all? We

are ready to say, we will do this, or that, or the other thing, not reflecting that there is one above us, whose negative will be too hard for most peremptory resolutions. We depend upon such and such an event to our designs, and cannot bear to think of their haveing any other. Fools that we are, to forget that Death like an unpassable gulph, may lie between us and the object we level at. And why then should we be confident of any future event, or disturb ourselves about it? Both are equally contradictory to reason, since nothing in this world is in our power or worth so much of our care.

3. Since Death for ever stops the execution of our Thoughts and Purposes, let us be advised not to defer the execution of our good resolves, especially those that enter into our preparation for another world, and are necessary to it. Let nothing prevail with us to put off these, no, not for a Day or an Hour. *Trust not the future, but improve the present*, though but an indifferent saying in the mouth of the Poet,* is a very good one, when turned to a christian sense. With this agrees *David*'s practice, [i] *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet to thy testimonies: I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments.* Our conscience will tell us this was wisely done, whether we will own

* Carpe diem quam minimum credula postero. *Hor.*

[i] Psal. cxix. 60.

own it or no. And why then ſhould we not imitate him herein, not only think on our ways, but reform them, not only reſolve to keep God's commandments, but do as we reſolve? Some time or other we will take care of our ſouls, and, by repentance and a holy life, ſecure the favour of God. There wants nothing in this reſolution to make it a wiſe one, but by its being more determinate. Some time or other, is next to no time. Reſolve therefore to ſet about this great work immediately; loſe no more time, while thou art debating when thou ſhalt turn to God, Death may ſtep in, and decide the fooliſh queſtion. To Day you will not; to Morrow you ſhall not be able. O Sinner, why ſo inconſiderate! What muſt be done, why wilt thou not do it preſently? Is it too ſoon to make ſure of happineſs, of eſcaping an eternal hell, and injoying an eternal heaven? But canſt thou be certain that another time will not be too late? Let me particularly addreſs myſelf to the Young; both my ſubject and the ſad occaſion demand it of me. Be perſuaded for once to break through an eſtabliſhed cuſtom. I own it hath been an old cuſtom, perhaps as old as the world, for Young Perſons to deliver themſelves up to their paſſions, their ſenſual deſires and inclinations, and to forget God, and neglect their Soul and Eternity: but ſure I am let the cuſtom be never ſo old, it is a very bad

one, and I would fain have you to be exceptions to it. The text ſupplies you with a moſt powerful motive to early religion, it is your own fault if it be not effectual; that it may, you ſhould ſeriouſly lay it to heart, and beg of God to imprint it on your minds. If Death overtakes you, when leaſt expected, you will ſay as *Job* in the text does; and as that Young Perſon, whoſe obſequies we lately ſolemnized, could have done, *My days are paſt, my purpoſes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart.* That this thought may make the deeper impreſſion, I ſhall intreat you to conſider well thoſe two or three things, with which I ſhall conclude.

1. Let me beg you to conſider the uncertainty of life, [k] *which is but a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away.* Experience ſhews that you are not too young to die, and the word of God, that you are not too young to be judged, and therefore you are not too young to be religious. You ſhould not boaſt of to morrow, and trifle away the preſent time, *becauſe you know not what a Day may bring forth.* Time is now travelling with the Death of millions, Kings and People, Princes and Judges of the earth, Young Men and Maidens, Old Men and Children; and, before another evening cloſe, may bring forth thine. The world is

[k] Jam. iv. 14. Prov. xxvii. 1.

is but one great *Burying-Place*, where graves lie ſcattered thick; hid, it may be, under the ſuperficial diſguiſe of Youth, or ſome other thin covering; but ready, as ſoon as trod upon to ſwallow us up quick. Being guilty as we are, and obnoxious to the diſpleaſure of Almighty God, how ſhould this reflection ſtartle us! Every one may ſay, as *Iſaac*, *I know not the Day of my Death.* And it is well we do not, that we may hold ourſelves always ready. We have cauſe to adore the divine wiſdom which keeps us in this uncertainty, as well as to admire our own ſtupidity, who notwithſtanding our ignorance of this momentous event, are ſo generally unconcerned to make any proviſion for it. We talk of *to morrow*, and yet are not ſure but God may ſay to us, as to the rich man in the parable, [1] *Thou Fool, this night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee.*

2. Think what the terrible conſequence will be, if Death ſhould come upon you, before you have done any thing more than barely thought, and purpoſed to make your peace with God. To be ſhut out from heaven, the bright abode of pure and friendly ſpirits, from the beatifick viſion and injoyment of God, and to be ſhut up in the priſon of hell, with no other company than fiends and furies, wicked and damned ſpirits,

[1] Luke xii. 20.

whoſe character is fully drawn into thoſe few words of the Apoſtle, *hateful and hating one another*, without all hopes of redemption from thence; this, this muſt be your inevitable portion. If you are wiſe, you will not ſtick a moment at ſacrificing a few youthful luſts, to avoid a ſtate of miſery, which you ſhould tremble to think of. To add no more.

3. Think of the vaſt advantage of being fully determined for a life of ſobriety and godlineſs in your younger years; of making a right choice at firſt, and being fixed in that choice. Beſides, it is preventing many errors in life, together with numberleſs troubles and perplexities, which unavoidably attend all who, throwing off the gentle yoke of religion, put themſelves into the power of their paſſions; beſides this privilege of early piety, it is the foundation of unſpeakable ſatisfaction and pleaſure. The moderation of the Young Perſon, in the purſuit and injoyment of ſenſual delights, is amply rewarded with pleaſures of a much nobler kind, not ſo tumultuous and violent perhaps, but infinitely more ſweet and permanent. Religion will give you the poſſeſſion and injoyment of yourſelves, gain you the ſecret eſteem of all, and the love and friendſhip of the wiſe and good; and which is more than all, the approbation of the great God. He that hath not God for the guide of his Youth, will wander and be in continual

tinual fear and danger of falling among thieves, or down ſome fatal precipice; ſo neceſſary is religion by way of preſervative from the many dangers, that incompaſs you in the days of your youth; and it is no leſs lovely than neceſſary, lovely in all, but more particularly in the young; like health which, though agreeable in every part of life, is attended with a bloom and vigor in youth, which it wants in old age.

Religion will render you uſeful in life; or if God, ſhould ſee fit to call you out of the world, before you have acted your deſigned part in it, will procure you a great deal of hope, and comfort in Death. And here indeed is the main trial. In that war, from which there is no diſcharge, religion will be of ſingular ſervice to you; here it triumphs, here it appears to its advantage, by quieting and ſupporting the ſoul in that laſt diſtreſs; not only teaching ſubmiſſion, but inabling the ſoul to practiſe it, inſpiring courage and confidence; or, at worſt, bringing the veſſel ſafe into the haven, though toſt with ſtorms. The wonderful patience with which, I am informed, our *Young Friend* deceaſed bore his uncommon pains, his calm reſignation of himſelf to the will of God, his tender and pious exhortations to his *Brothers*, and grateful acknowledgement of the care of his *Parents* in his education, ſeem to argue that he was no ſtranger to the power of reli-

religion, and the operations of the divine Spirit; which cannot but be ground of much ſatisfaction to the *Parents* and *Relations*.

I ſhall conclude with my wiſhes and prayers, that you would hearken to the opinion and advice of your *Friends* and *Intimates*, when they have been leaving this world, and ſtanding upon the brink of another; at which time men have right notions of things, if ever they have ſo. We are all of us, God knows, too apt to ſlight the moſt friendly *Admonitions* of the *Living*; but methinks, we ſhould pay ſome regard to the *Words* of the *Dying*. Let us think of the Deaths of our Acquaintance; let us think ſeriouſly of our own; and live now as we ſhall wiſh we had done when we come to die.

Death aboliſhed by JESUS CHRIST.

A

Funeral Sermon

FOR

Mr. SAMUEL MULLINS,

Who died at

TAUNTON,

IN THE

XVII. Year of his Age.

1727.

TO

Mrs. *MULLINS.*

MADAM,

THERE may be ſome ſatisfaction, *under a private Affliction, in thinking that others ſuffer with us, but I doubt very little* ſupport. *The* ſatisfaction *in this caſe, ariſeth from the nature of human Paſſions, which are fond of juſtifying themſelves, and conſequently give us a ſort of pleaſure amidſt all the trouble and uneaſineſs which they occaſion, when they have this to plead for themſelves, that the* Object *was deſerving, and is ſo acknowledged by perſons leſs intereſted than we are. But ſtill, how is this* a relief *againſt our ſorrows, that they appear to be too well grounded? On this account, there are no methods for calming the thoughts and paſſions of the heart, like thoſe of* Religion; *as there is no* Religion, *tho' believed to be true, that hath ſo many and powerful topicks of Conſolation as the* Chriſtian. *All required to make us feel the mighty efficacy of theſe* conſolations in Chriſt, *is the* knowledge *of our having a part in them, grounded*

grounded on the conſciouſneſs of our ſincerity; and applying *the mind to the ſerious conſideration of them, till it is poſſeſſed of their juſt meaning, and ſees their infinite weight and value.*

They that know the heart of a Parent, will eaſily apprehend, that the loſs of a Beloved Child is no ſmall Trial; and that *of an* Only Son, *in the Spring of his Days, and with the lovely Bloſſoms of his Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and Piety upon him, ſtill greater. And yet, even this trial is not ſo great, but that the comforts which flow from the glorious diſcoveries of the Goſpel, its precious* Promiſes *and its divine* Aſſiſtances, *are more than equal to it.*

That You may not be a ſtranger to theſe heavenly Supports; *and may, in a particular manner, experience the force of the Argument handled in the following* Diſcourſe, *which had not been publiſhed, but at your repeated requeſt, ſhall be the Prayer of,*

MADAM,

Your moſt Affectionate Friend

and obliged Humble Servant,

Taunton, April 17, 1727.

HENRY. GROVE.

SERMON VI.

Death abolished by JESUS CHRIST.

---

2 TIM. I. 10.

---Who hath abolished Death---

CHRISTIANITY had hardly ever a more bitter enemy than the Apostle *Paul* before his Conversion, or an abler and more zealous advocate than he proved himself afterwards. To what shall we ascribe this surprizing difference in the sentiments and behaviour of the same man? His first Conversion was owing to a miracle; his extraordinary activity and resolution in the following course of his ministry, were the effect of rational conviction, joined with the warmth of his natural temper. It was *the excellency of the knowledge of Christ that made him count all things else but loss in comparison of it.* He, in this Chapter, exhorts his Son *Timothy not to be ashamed of the testimony of their*

their Lord, ver. 8. withal declaring, that he himself was not, *ver.* 12. whatever reproaches and hardships he happened to suffer for it; well satisfied of its being the most glorious cause in the whole world. Their *Master* was their *Saviour*; all those *Purposes of Grace*, which lay concealed in the bosom of the Father *before the world began*, ver. 9. *were made manifest by his appearing, who hath abolished Death, and brought Life and Immortality to light by the Gospel.*

That the Gospel contains the *Doctrine of a blessed and immortal Life*, is a consideration, that should endear it to the love, and esteem, of sinful, dying creatures; as much as the *evidence* of its proofs recommends it to the belief of all serious and unprejudiced minds. In this latter respect, *it is a faithful saying*, a Religion intirely credible; in the former, *a saying worthy of all acceptation*, to those who *through fear of Death are all their lifetime subject to bondage.* One would think, nothing more should be necessary, to gain the Redeemer a hearty welcome, besides the single benefit of his having vanquished, and destroyed this last enemy. This glorious Person hath done what no one else ever did, or can do, *He hath abolished Death.*

In discoursing on this Subject, I shall do these two things.

I. I shall

I. I ſhall conſider in what ſenſe, and by what means our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST *hath aboliſhed Death.*

II. I ſhall lay before you ſome thoughts, in anſwer to the Queſtion, Why Chriſt had not ſo aboliſhed Death as to exempt men from a neceſſity of dying.

I. Let us conſider in what ſenſe, and by what means our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST *hath aboliſhed Death.* The experience of all mankind ſhews, that we are not to underſtand it of his puting an immediate ſtop to the conqueſts of this King of Terrors, and delivering men from the law of mortality. Death hath reigned in all ages paſt, and will reign in all ages to come; over the followers of the Lamb, as well as over others; *there is no diſcharge in this war.* The only queſtion here is, In what ſenſe Death may be ſaid *to be aboliſhed*, though it be not immediately deſtroyed? The original word for *aboliſhed*, καταργησανλ@, ſignifies *to defeat*, *to fruſtrate*, or *make void.* Our Redeemer having undertaken to reſtore our lapſed nature, and put it into a condition as happy, as it ever injoyed, we may ſay, even more happy; and to this end, having done and ſuffered all that the wiſdom or juſtice of God demanded of him, hath hereby, as it were, turned the arms of Death againſt itſelf, chang-

ed its nature, disarmed it of all its terrors, and rendered all its victories and acquisitions of no effect. Death is not now the same thing, as it would have been without a Saviour. Its nature is quite altered in these two Respects--that it is no longer a mark of God's vindictive displeasure---and that its empire will not be perpetual---With regard to the first of these, the Apostle asks in a triumphant manner, *O Death, where is thy sting?* With regard to the latter, *O Grave, where is thy victory?*

1. Death is no longer a mark of God's vindictive displeasure. We cannot argue that the human race is forsaken, and cast off by God, because it is mortal; it doth not follow that because the carcasses of all men must fall in this wilderness, they shall therefore never enter into the promised Land; that God is not *reconciling the world to himself*, or actually reconciled to any, because *there is no man living, who shall not see Death.* We know the contrary to be true; that though the penalty as to the *Letter* of it, be fulfilled, yet the *Curse* is abolished. [a] *The sting of Death is sin, and the strength of sin is the Law; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Sin derives its *guilt* from its being a transgression of a righteous and holy Law; and Death its *malignity* from unpardoned guilt: when therefore the Law is satisfied and

[a] 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57.

and ſin forgiven, Death may kill, but cannot hurt, and in the laſt event is more a friend than an enemy. [b] *If ye believe not that I am he*, the *Meſſiah*, the Saviour of the world, *ye ſhall die in your ſins*. The ſame may be ſaid to them who believe the Truth, but are never ſanctified by it, *ye ſhall die in your ſins*. And to ſuch as theſe Death is terrible indeed, being but the begining of ſorrows; while to the truly good man, the man who believes and obeys the Goſpel, it is the end and cure of them all.

Where ſin remains the ſeparation that Death makes between the Soul and the Body is the leaſt thing to be conſidered; foraſmuch as it likewiſe tranſmits the Soul into a ſtate of darkneſs and miſery, in which it muſt live eternally ſeparated from God. O what Praiſes do we therefore owe to the Redeemer of men, that this, without our own inexcuſable neglect and folly, cannot be our caſe! Praiſes as exalted, and as endleſs, as our happineſs. [c] *Who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died.* [d] *The children of men being partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf took part of the ſame, that through Death he might deſtroy him that had the power of Death, that is, the Devil, and deliver them, who through fear of Death were all their life-time ſubject to bondage.* Why may not one thing meant by the *Power of Death*,

[b] John viii. 24. [c] Rom. viii. 34. [d] Heb. ii. 14, 15.

be thoſe terrors that do frequently accompany the *approach*, and even the *thoughts* of it, and raiſe a tempeſt in the guilty ſoul, which the enemy of mankind is ſure to increaſe, and make his advantage of, as often as he is permited, tempting the ſoul to diſpair, that ſo, not ſeeing any way of eſcape, it might renounce the purpoſe of returning to God, and conſent to the moſt ſinful methods of prolonging a wretched life, and makeing it paſs with pleaſure, while it continues; in the mean while labouring to perſuade itſelf, for its greater eaſe, that religion is all a fable, and what is ſaid of another life to come after this, no way to be regarded? And thus is the dominion of Satan in the world kept up. In men, ignorant of the expiation of ſin by the Sacrifice of the Croſs, or, becauſe of their Unbelief and Impenitency, having no part in that Sacrifice, the dread of Death is not more natural than reaſonable; and where this dread of Death prevails to a high degree, it perfectly inſlaves the Soul, and renders life a burthen. So formidable a thing is Death to the natural man. *Of all dreadful things the moſt dreadful*, as the *Philoſopher* ſtyles it. Its dart is diped is poiſon; and look hideous and affrighting. O how much better, and more full of hope and comfort, is the condition of the pious chriſtian, who, being reconciled to God, by the Death of his Son, can, when

when Dying, rejoyce in his ſalvation, and defy Death to ſeparate him from his Love!

2. The empire of Death will not be perpetual, for *as in Adam all die, ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.* Death ſhall bring all mankind under his dominion, with the exception of that generation which ſhall be found alive at the coming of the Judge. To how little purpoſe, when they are to be recovered out of his hand, and not one ſubject left him throughout his dark territories? The day is haſtening when all that are in their graves ſhall hear the voice of the Son of man, and live; and our Saviour ſhall, with his own hand, deſtroy this mighty champion, this laſt enemy; *he hath the keys of Hell*, the *State* and *Place* of the Dead; his command is abſolute over the inviſible regions of ſeparate ſpirits, and the ſilent manſions of the grave; which, at his biding, will let go his captives, not for price or reward; the ſea delivering up the dead that are in it, and the grave the dead that are in it. Time was when Chriſt himſelf became obedient to Death, the Death of the Croſs; he now injoys a full recompence; and inſtead of thoſe few that came out of their graves, to honour his reſurrection, and appeared in the holy City, ſees all the Sons of *Adam* riſing out of their duſt, and hath the pleaſure to behold his faithful followers, a multitude without number, advancing towards

him in white and shining robes, whom, in their meanest state, he was never ashamed to be called *his brethren*, and much less will be so then. Here we may use those words of *Isaiah*, applying them to Death. [c] *Wo to thee that spoileth, and thou wast not spoiled; when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt thyself be spoiled.* This sense of abolishing Death, by a resurrection of the dead, seems to be principally meant in the Text; for after the Apostle had said that Christ *hath abolished Death*, he immediately adds, *and hath brought Life and Immortality to Light by the Gospel*; which words I take to have a peculiar reference to the resurrection of the Body, and that immortal Life of the whole man which will ensue.

The doctrine of the Soul's existence out of the Body, and a future state of Rewards and Punishments, makes a part of the *Universal Creed* of mankind; but the Resurrection is a distinguishing doctrine of the Christian Religion. And indeed, the most proper and exact Translation of the words had been, *Life and Incorruption*, or an *Incorruptable Life*; which we have the greater reason to think ought to be understood of the *Body*, because the same Divine Writer, in another place, treating expressly of the Resurrection of the Body tells us, that though it was *sown in Corruption it should be raised in*

[c] Isai. xxxiii. 1.

in Incorruption; that this Corruptable must put on Incorruption, and this Mortal must put on Immortality. Christ hath procured immortality for all; and for all that die in him a glorious and blessed one. By his Death, voluntarily submited to, he did not merely *satisfy*, but *merit*; not merely obtain eternal redemption for the *Souls* of the righteous, but for their *Bodies* too; not merely acquire a right to restore his followers to *Innocence*, but to raise them to *Glory*. *He is the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in him, though he was dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in him shall never die.* And as the Redeemer procures a happy Immortality for his faithful servants, so by his *Grace* and *Spirit* he is continually preparing them for that. *In bringing many Sons to Glory* he is appointed by God *the Captain of their Salvation*; it is under his conduct and discipline they are trained up for heaven; he communicates to them his Divine Spirit to exalt their natures, and refine their tempers and affections, that they may be capable of a part of these holy joys; and as an earnest of that undefiled inheritance which is reserved for them. It is in this quality the Spirit is bestowed on believers, [f] *We that are in this tabernacle do groan being burthened; not for that we would be uncloathed, but cloathed upon, that mortality*

[f] 2 Cor. v. 4, 5.

might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

Yet further, Christ in his own Resurrection hath given all that belong to him, both the strongest *Assurance*, and most lively *Representation* of theirs. [g] *Being risen from the dead, he is become the first-fruits of them that slept.* Now as the first-fruits fore-run the harvest, so they are of the same kind with it. The Head being risen, the Members must needs follow in their proper order. And if it be asked, *With what bodies do they come?* The answer is easy, their Bodies will be the same and yet unconceivably different; in respect to their *substance*, and *general figure*, the same as now; but unconceivably changed, and improved, in their *Qualities*; *spiritual*, *glorious*, *powerful*, *incorruptible*, and *immortal*; for *as we have borne the image of the earthly Adam, so likewise shall we bear the image of the heavenly*; *who shall change this vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the working, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.* And how could the empire of Death be abolished more honourably to our Saviour, or more advantageously for us, than by a change from an imperfect, sinful, mortal

[g] 1 Cor. xv. 20.

mortal ſtate, to immortality of bliſs and glory? I proceed,

II. To the next thing propoſed, which is to lay before you ſome thoughts, in anſwer to the Queſtion, Why Chriſt had not ſo aboliſhed Death, as to exempt men from a neceſſity of dying. Why *is it appointed for men once to die?* Why does this ſentence ſtand unrepealed? Would it not have been a more ſignal demonſtration of the *Grace* of God, and the *Merits* of the Redeemer, had man paſt into another world without ſeeing Death? I preſume we are all agreed, that the reaſon of this doth not ariſe from any defect of *Merit* or *Power* in our Saviour. Not from any defect of *Merit*. It is not that any thing was wanting in the *Satisfaction* of Chriſt, that all who believe in him are not immediately diſcharged from all the penal effects of ſin, and made happy and immortal, If the Blood of Chriſt was of value ſufficient to releaſe us from *eternal* Puniſhments, and to intitle us to an *everlaſting* Reward, we cannot imagine, but, if God had ſo pleaſed, and as to the Perfection of the *Attonement*, it might very well have availed for our deliverance from *temporal* Death. Was a man to diſcharge an immence Debt for another, he would clear the whole, and not leave a few Farthings for the Debter himſelf to pay. Thus here;

can

can it reasonably be supposed, that notwithstanding the *Satisfaction* made to the Justice of God by the obedience and sufferings of his Son, we likewise must satisfy for a part of our guilt, and die to expiate it? Besides, the little honour which such a supposition does our Saviour, it is absurd in the nature of the thing; since, the *Satisfaction* of Christ being compleat, there can be no necessity of exacting any thing from us, nor any valuable end served by it. And as little ground is there to suspect, that Christ's not abolishing Death in this sense, proceeds from want of *Power*. For surely, the *Power* required to raise the dead, is not less than that by which men might be preserved from dying. The former we know our Saviour to be possessed of, and that he cannot therefore want the latter; especially when we consider, that the men who shall be living, when Christ descends to Judgment, shall not die, but be changed; so as, without being uncloathed of their Bodies, to be cloathed upon with immortality: which shews, that the same way of new-making the Bodies of the Saints, without taking them down, is not impossible in every age of the world. But what then may we conceive to be the reasons of this dispensation? Among several very probable ones, I shall insist on a few of the most obvious.

1. The

1. The truth of God in the threatening of Death, is hereby more fully cleared, and vindicated, [h] *In the Day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.* Not thou, or another for thee; but *thou ſhalt ſurely die*; thou ſhalt become the right of Death, which ſhall immediately begin to work in thee, and as certainly prevail over thee, as if thou wert inſtantly to die. The ſentence, after the tranſgreſſion was committed, was alike abſolute; [i] *Duſt thou art, and unto Duſt ſhalt thou return*; man henceforward ſhall have no privilege, in reſpect of mortality, above other living creatures, but ſhall die as they do; he and they [k] *have one breath, and ſhall go unto one place; all are of the Duſt, and all ſhall turn to Duſt again.*

To clear this matter I ſhall obſerve, that by the breach of this Command, *Not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge, of Good and Evil,* a double penalty was incured, *natural,* and *poſitive.* By the *natural* penalty, I mean, that which the Reaſon of our Firſt Parents would tell them they were to expect, whether mentioned, or no; as namely, that they ſhould forfeit the happineſs of God's Favour and Communion with him; to which they ſhould not be again admited, but on terms of Reconciliation, unknown to them, becauſe not depending on them, but on God to appoint. Such a penalty as this is underſtood

[h] Gen. ii. 17. [i] iii. 19. [k] Eccleſ. iii. 19, 20.

stood in all the Laws given by God to his intelligent creatures, The *positive* penalty is that which is explicitly, or in so many words, annexed to the Law, as, in the present case, *Death*. Death was threatened to *Adam*, and in him, to his *Posterity*; for *by one man sin entered into the world, and Death by sin*; that is, by the sin of this one man. And what is this Death? It is something that [k] *passeth upon all men*; and therefore cannot be *eternal* Death, or what in the New Testament is called the *second* Death; inasmuch as every holy person is secured against this. It remains then that we interpret the *Death* that came into the world by *Adam*'s first sin, and which all men are liable to, as descended from him, in the most obvious sense of the word, as signifying the separation of Soul and Body, or *man's returning to the Dust*. These last are the very words of the original sentence; and that this sentence was not confined to the First Man, but included his Posterity, omiting that parallel place out of *Ecclesiastes*, before-mentioned, chap. iii. ver. 19, 20. we may argue from what is said, *Heb.* ix. 17. *It is appointed unto men once to die*; for where else is this *appointed*, but in this sentence, *Dust thou art, and to Dust shalt thou return?* Now see and admire the expedient which the Divine Wisdom hath found out! It was fit the threatening

[k] Rom. v. 12.

ening ſhould be executed; the veracity of God ſeemed to require it. Man therefore ſhall die. But ſhall man die without hope? Is there no room for mercy? Bleſſed be God, our caſe is not thus deſperate. Our gracious God hath *found a ranſom*, not *to deliver us from going down into the pit*, but *to bring us up out of it*. We die becauſe *Adam* ſined; but becauſe Chriſt died, we ſhall riſe again. Becauſe of our own ſins, we deſerve not only to die, but to be miſerable for ever; Chriſt hath ſatisfied for our ſins, and by that means, made way for our being intirely reſtored to the preſence and love of our Maker. O the depth both of the Wiſdom, and the Grace, of God!—The contrary example of thoſe, who, when the end of all things is come, *ſhall not die*, but *be changed*, doth not at all invalidate the preſent Argument; ſince as the way in which they ſhall put off mortality is peculiar, ſo the circumſtances of their caſe will be the ſame; and notwithſtanding this exception, it is ſtill exactly true, that *the human race is mortal.*

2. Death is continued as a ſtanding leſſon and example of the evil of ſin; that we might be warned not to offend this holy God, by tranſgreſſing his righteous Commands, might not ſlight his Authority, play with his Anger, or preſume on his Goodneſs. See, what one ſin alone hath, and will, coſt! The Death of a whole Race! Of thouſands

ſands and millions of creatures, that might otherwiſe have been immortal! Is it ſafe, or wiſe, think ye, to provoke this God? If there is no avoiding a thing that Nature hath ſuch an abhorrence to, as the Diſunion of Soul and Body; if we muſt neceſſarily ſuffer this, as the poſterity of ſinful Parents, of how much ſorer puniſhment ſhall they be thought worthy, who continue in a courſe of actual, wilful, and preſumptuous ſin? And, without repentance, what have they to look for? Were men never to taſte the bitterneſs of Death, they would not be ſo ſenſible of the bitterneſs of ſin; were they to ſpend a few years in this world, and then not to die, but diſappear, they would be more apt to ſpend their years in vanity. The great Governor and Judge of the world would not appear ſo awful on his Throne, as he does now, that he commiſſions Death to go forth on his *pale Horſe*, and to lay the nations of the earth waſte and deſolate. O how ſhall I reconcile myſelf to this terrible, this ſin revenging God, *in whoſe hand is the breath of all living*, which he takes away when he pleaſes? Hide myſelf from him I cannot; nor, by all my tears and entreaties, prevail with him to grant *that I may live for ever, and not ſee corruption*; but by true and timely repentance, I may obtain the forgiveneſs of all my ſins, and get into the number

number of thoſe bleſſed perſons over whom the *ſecond* Death hath no power.

3. Death is ordained as a means of aboliſhing ſin. And there ſeems to be a peculiar congruity or fitneſs in this method of purifying human nature from its corrupt affections, in order to demonſtrate the wiſdom of God, which can bring good of evil; that as by ſin Death came into the world, ſo by Death ſin ſhall be utterly extinguiſhed. Sin, when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth *eternal* Death to the wicked; and *temporal* Death, having finiſhed the work given it to do, ſhall put an everlaſting period to the ſins of the righteous. Sin firſt rendered man liable to Death; Death ſets the good man at liberty from ſin; and, by delivering him from ſin, places him above all future liableneſs to Death. [m] *He that is dead is freed from ſin.* The body of *ſin* is deſtroyed together with the body of *fleſh*; ſo that, from that happy moment, the ſoul is all life and purity, every irregular deſire is killed, every ſtain purged off.

And though I am not of the opinion of ſome, that all the ſinful Propenſities of nature, having their original from the Body, will, in every renewed ſoul, ceaſe and vaniſh of courſe, as ſoon as the tie between it and the Body is broken, ſo as not to need any further operation of the divine Spirit to compleat

[m] Rom. vi. 7.

compleat the work; (for this would make evil habits to be intirely corporeal, and to hang as loose to the Soul, as the garment of the Body does; and consequently, would infer the separate state of all souls, both of the just and the unjust, to be a state of sinless Purity) though, I say, I am far from this opinion, yet I cannot but esteem it very probable, concerning souls which have maintained their superiority over the Body while they were in it, that their absence from the Body will naturally contribute to their greater freedom from all vitious inclinations, by cuting off all Temptations on the side of the Body, restoring the rectitude of the judgment, and drawing the curtain that was before things spiritual and eternal; the effect of which will be a sudden and mighty increase of affection to these glorious objects. To which I will add, that it seems founded in Reason, that perfect liberty from sin should follow the Soul's release from the Body, in which it *first* learned to sin, and which hath been the *Tempter*, as well as the *Instrument*, in most of the sins which it hath been drawn to commit. A most blessed state this, into which Death translates the righteous! Which may justly serve to reconcile them to it, and gain it pardon for all the fears it puts them to, and the loss they sustain by it. If this tabernacle of the Body be pulled down, let this comfort us, that like

like *Sampſon*, we ſhall be revenged at our Death, and all our enemies will be cruſhed, and periſh in the fall. Every individual Saint, as he dies, enters into a ſtate of faultleſs perfection; and it is not long before the whole Aſſembly and Church of the Faithful, *whoſe names are writen in Heaven*, will be compleated; at what time *it will be preſented a glorious Church, not having ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing*, but endued with unblemiſhed holineſs; and then *cometh the end*, when all the ſpirits of the juſt, that have lived from the begining to the end of the world, being thoroughly ſanctified and cleanſed, ſhall have Bodies prepared them, pure and ſpotleſs like themſelves, into which they ſhall joyfully enter, there to dwell for ever.

4. Death is continued for the tryal of the chriſtian's Faith, and other graces. The Body drops to the earth, and what becomes of the Soul? Or is there any ſuch thing, properly ſpeaking, as a Soul; a Being that can live out of the Body as well as in it? Is it not rather made up of the finer parts of the Body? And are not all its thoughts, reaſonings, and volitions a reſult from the motion and temperament of the blood and ſpirits; in conſequence of which, when the Body dies, the Soul muſt die with it? What is a man better than a beaſt, ſince *that which befalleth the ſons of men befalleth beaſts, even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, ſo dieth the*

other, yea, they have all one breath; so that, to appearance, *a man hath no preheminence above a beast.* And why should we imagine then that he hath any? This tempts some men to turn unbelievers, glad to imbrace any notions that will countenance them in their libertine courses. Here then Faith comes in to the relief of the good man. He sees not another world, his senses rather contradict it, but by Faith he knows that there must be such a world; partly from the testimony of his own Reason, which convinces him, that so noble a creature as man must be made for a longer duration than *threescore years and ten*, and for higher purposes than he answers in this life; but chiefly on the testimony of God's Word. Yes, the Soul is of a distinct nature, and independent existence, from the Body; doth not at Death cease to be, or fall asleep, but only removes to other dwellings; and, for as much as its power of thinking was not derived from the Body, but very much cloged and hindered by it, the Soul not only survives and acts in a separate state, but is capable of sublimer operations, and more intense delights or sorrows than in this Body. I am persuaded there is another world, tho' invisible; another state besides, and beyond, this; though instead of seeing men pass into it, all I perceive of them becomes the prey of Death and Oblivion. This persuasion, entertained

tertained upon rational and ſcripture motives, and applied to the regulation of the heart and life, is an argument of an ingenuous and well diſpoſed mind; which a perſuaſion much ſtronger would hardly be, that was wrought by a daily view of great numbers vaniſhing out of ſight, without leaving their Bodies behind them. The teſtimony of one or more ſent from the dead, to the truth and reality of another world, would not be ſo irreſiſtible an evidence of it as this.

Again; we ſee the Body as ſoon as it is dead becomes as ſenſeleſs and motionleſs as a ſtone, or a clod of earth; and not long after turns to duſt, its form intirely loſt, and the very particles of which it was compoſed ſundered it may be at the greateſt diſtance from one another. Now there is ſomething difficult and ſhocking to the firſt thoughts of our mind, in the ſuppoſition of theſe Bodies riſing from the grave. How ſhall theſe dry bones live? How ſhall this ſcattered duſt rally again? How can it enter into the heart of man to conceive that the Soul and Body ſhall be reunited, after they have been ſeparated ſo long? This is a tryal worthy the Faith of a chriſtian; and is not an over-match for Faith, though it be ſo for the Imagination. It is enough that God hath promiſed it; I leave it to him to anſwer the difficulties, whoſe power is infinite, joined with a knowledge and underſtanding that

are the same. Yet further; I must die, possibly shall be called to die for Religion. Have I Faith enough to bear me up in such a time? Or to carry me to it? Is my belief of an unseen world so strong, my hope of heaven so lively and well-grounded, my love to God so superlative, that I can, without regret, resign this life, and its most valuable injoyments, and freely enter on a new state of Being? Are these graces, in conjunction, sufficient to overcome in some good measure my natural abhorrence of Death, and make me willing to depart out of the Body, that I may be present with the Lord? Yet once more,

5. Death is for a time suffered to reign over the human race, because abolishing its empire at the last day, in the manner it will be then done, will be more glorious for the Redeemer, than preventing its temporary power and dominion would have been. Next to creation, what more illustrious act of omnipotence than raising the Dead? What more surprising spectacle than a world starting new out of its ruins? The innumerable dead returning at once to life? The first man, and all his offspring, who lived in distant and successive ages of the world making their appearance together, and together resuming those Bodies of which they were, one after another, dispossessed by Death? They that made their exit out of the world a thou-

a thouſand or two thouſand years ago, ſhall be glorified no ſooner than we; *they obtained a good report through Faith, yet ſhall they not receive the* final *Promiſe, God having provided ſome better thing for us, that they, without us, ſhould not be made perfect.* And is there not ſomething more grand, auguſt, and aſtoniſhing in ſuch a ſcene of things, than if men had, one by one, been tranſlated, in their Bodies, into the world of recompences? What conqueror, celebrated in the annals of time, ever equaled our Saviour? The conqueſts of Death are as extenſive as his, but not ſo rapid. What Death took ſeveral ages to conquer, our great Redeemer ſhall recover, as it were, *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the ſound of the laſt trumpet, for the trumpet ſhall ſound, and the dead ſhall be raiſed incorruptable.* By Faith, behold the King of Saints at the head of his triumphant army! How ſplendid is his appearance! And how dazling would be theirs, were not their glory in ſome reſpect eclipſed by his!

Nothing now remains but the Application of this Subject. *Hath Chriſt aboliſhed Death?* Then,

1. How little reaſon hath the true chriſtian to be afraid of Death. Why ſhould he ſhrink and tremble at its approach, when it only wears a frightful vizor? Why decline its ſummons, when it is ſent on the

kindest message, to bring his Soul into the Presence of his Lord? Christian, hath not thy Saviour drank of the same cup; since which, though bitter to sense, is it not become a cup of blessing? A brave *Athenian* condemned to Death by his ungrateful country-men, observing one, that was to suffer with him, under the greatest distress, upbraids him in this manner, "Is it nothing "to thee that thou art to die with *Phocion?*" This supported the penitent Thief, as he saw Jesus hanging by him; "I suffer justly, *yet* "*Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy* "*Kingdom*;" with which faith of his, our blessed Master was so well pleased, as to assure him, *this Day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.* And can he then forget any one that hath for a long time been his devoted willing servant? It is impossible he should. Alas, but I must go down into the grave, and *make my bed in the darkness!* But as God said unto *Jacob, Fear not to go down into* Egypt, *for I will go down with thee, and will also surely bring thee up again*, dost thou not hear him after the same manner comforting and incouraging thee? God will appoint thee a set time, and remember thee; will support thee in Death, and raise thee from the Dead. Wherefore say as the Psalmist, *Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of Death, I will fear no evil; for thou art*

art with me, thy rod and thy ſtaff they comfort me.

2. The good chriſtian under the loſs of thoſe that are in the ſame number with himſelf, ought not to ſorrow as others that have no hope. For if *we believe that Jeſus died and roſe again, even ſo them alſo that ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him.* It is hard, I confeſs, to part with a dear and valuable Acquaintance, Relative, or Friend, *that was as our own Soul, with whom we took ſweet counſel,* and who was often helpful to us. Perhaps there are ſome circumſtances more than ordinarily afflicting in the ſtroke. The Perſon removed by Death, may, as in the hiſtory of the Widow of *Nain,* be the *only Son of his Mother* *, concerning whom ſhe was ready to ſay, *This ſame ſhall comfort me*; in the flower of his days, one of great hopes, and likely to have been uſeful to the world, and the church of God, if his life had been prolonged. O, ſay not in this caſe, or ſo much as once entertain the thought, what profit is it to ſerve God, ſince *righteouſneſs delivereth not from Death?* To what purpoſe were all the bounties of nature, and this natural ſtock improved by induſtry? To what end the trouble and expence of education? Why was all this waſte? Since as the Fool (the ungodly ſinner, the ſtupid Soul, of low capa-

* This was the caſe as to the Deceaſed.

cities, and mean endowments, the ignorant, and the slothful, from whom nothing was to be expected) dies, so dieth the ingenious and sober Youth, whose attainments were beyond his years, and promised early fruits of wisdom and religion? What incouragement is here for any one to dig for wisdom as for hidden treasure, when, it may be, before any use can be made of it, it is buried in the earth again? So when *Soloman* saw that himself, the wisest of the sons of men, had no privilege from the calamities of life, or the arrest of Death, beyond the most simple and sottish, that one thing happened to them both, he cries out, not without something of passion and surprize, *And why then was I more wise?*

It is a sufficient answer to all this, that no man perisheth at Death in the same sense as Beasts do; and, least of all, the wise and virtuous; that the soul is not dissolved or annihilated; its excellent faculties, its intellectual, moral, and divine acquisitions, are not lost, but only perfected at once, instead of being carried on by our slow and painful methods; that Preparations for usefulness are accepted by a gracious God, and will be amply crowned. So that whatever occasion there be for mourning, when good men are taken from the earth, whether in their green or in their riper age, it is all on the part of those that are left behind, who lose the benefit

nefit or the pleaſure they might have received from their longer ſtay. But though they have reaſon to mourn, yet not ſo as to forget that the breach is not incurable, the parting is not for ever. We part for a little while to meet again in a better world, with better diſpoſitions and qualities, and upon better terms, never to ſin, ſorrow, or die more, never to ſpeak an idle word, or do a fooliſh thing, which, Gods knows, is more than can be ſaid of the beſt of us now. The Souls of the Faithful departed this life, live with God, and one another, in the moſt delightful intercourſe and communication. But the Soul is not the whole man; it muſt therefore be a moſt pleaſing thought to creatures, conſtituted as we are, that pious Souls ſhall meet their Bodies, and then, in this ſtate of union, converſe and join embraces with their Fellow-Saints. Never were the paſſions of Friends ſo viſible in their looks as they will be then. With unſpeakable pleaſure will they ſurvey themſelves and one another, and all tears ſhall be wiped away from their eyes; which, by the way, is a very good argument why ſuch perſons ſhould moderate them now.

3. *Hath Chriſt aboliſhed Death?* How dear ſhould this render him, and his memory, to mortal men. *To them that believe he is precious*, among many accounts, on this, that he hath opened the gate of life to them.

them. A wretch, whom meagre famine ſtares in the face, can never forget the bountiful hand that relives him; the poor captive the generous Soul that redeems him; a condemned malefactor the compaſſionate perſon that procures his pardon; a man in danger of loſing his life the uncommon friend that ſaves it, at the hazard, and much more with the certain loſs of his own. Jesus Christ is this *Benefactor*, this *Redeemer*, this *Friend* to us, and ought therefore to be loved and ſerved with the greateſt ardour, and had in everlaſting remembrance. To conclude,

4. *Hath Chriſt aboliſhed Death?* How ſolicitous then ſhould every one be to ſecure his intereſt in this Redeemer, by complying with the terms, on which alone, he will become *the Author of Salvation* to any. If I lead a wicked and ungodly life; if I am under the power of ſenſual and worldly luſts; if I deſpiſe the tenders of goſpel-grace; in a word, if I am an enemy to Chriſt, by not having the ſame mind in me that was in him, and doing the ſame works of righteouſneſs that he did, but the quite contrary; how can it be ſuppoſed that he will be ſo far my Friend, as to raiſe me to a bleſſed and glorious immortality? Raiſed I ſhall be as well as others; but, alas my awaking will be to Pain, Horror, and Miſery! To a holy Jeſus none can be acceptable but holy perſons;

perſons; he will eſpouſe the cauſe of none but ſuch; he will be a Saviour to no others.

When I ſee ſo many fall ſacrifices to Death, ſome on my right hand, and ſome on my left, and the examples are ſometimes the more awakening for being of perſons that might ſeem to have ſome right to think of longer life, on account either of their youth, or ſtrength, ſhould it not make me thoughtful what I have to do in the midſt of ſo many Deaths? Where the Perſon deceaſed was a bad man, how I may avoid his End. Where there is reaſon to think that he is a good man, how I may die like him, Was he not my equal, my companion, my choſen acquaintance, on whom Death hath ſeized? And ſhall I be like the beaſt of the field, who when their fellows go to the ſlaughter, ſeem not to miſs their company, nor make one reflection on their own danger? Can I forbear aſking *Why was he taken? And why am I left?* Why was he cut down, while I am ſuffered to ſtand yet longer? Was it not, that as he was fitter to live, ſo more prepared to die? O if I had been appointed and choſen to Death, in what condition and poſture of Soul was I to meet him? I adore the ſovereign decrees of Providence, not ſevere to him, who was ready for his change, and kind and merciful to me. Whatever were the reaſons of this difference made between him and me ſure I am, the conſideration of it reproves

reproves my youthful vanity and misspence of time, my pleasurable and careless way of living, my too great unconcern about my Soul, and my everlasting state; and should awaken me to be more diligent and active, more serious and devout, more sollicitous to redeem and improve my time, to think of those things that are pure, lovely, and honourable, and of good report, and, whatever gifts or attainments I possess, to lay them all on God's Altar, as an humble offering to him. And thus, by the grace of God, I am determined to act; for these I see are the things that will be found unto praise, honour, and glory, when my place here on earth shall know me no more.

My Young Friend was but shown to this world, and then transplanted to another; and my Lord and Master himself finished his Ministry in less than four Years time, a short but glorious course. May I *run the Race set before me*, whether it be longer or shorter, with like zeal and vigour, *looking to Jesus the Author and Finisher of my Faith*, and depending intirely on him, both for strength in the way, and for my reward at the end. *To them that are in Christ, there is no Condemnation*; *all things are theirs*, Death itself not excepted. Say therefore, I am resolved to submit to the Redeemer; I will be his, on his own terms, which, I am fully satisfied, cannot but be reasonable; it

it ſhall be my ambition, as it is my duty, to love him, obey him, imitate him, and live to him; and then at laſt, *I ſhall not be aſhamed of my Hope, knowing whom I have truſted, and perſuaded, that he is able to keep that which I have commited to him, againſt that Day.*

The fear of Death, as a natural Paſſion, conſidered, both with reſpect to the grounds of it, and the remedies againſt it.

IN A

Funeral Diſcourſe

Occaſioned by the

Much lamented DEATH

OF

Mrs. *Elizabeth Welman,*

IN THE

XVI. Year of her Age.

1727-8.

TO

Mrs. *WELMAN.*

MADAM,

THEY that are wise, and understand the loving kindness of the Lord, can discern his paternal affection, and tender care of the welfare and happiness of those that fear him, in the sharpest trials, and most uncomfortable and darkest scenes of life. For though no affliction be for the present joyous but grievous, yet have they not any reason to complain; since, besides the peaceable fruits of righteousness, which they gather from these thorns, there is this further advantage attending an afflicted condition, that it brings them to entertain more friendly, and unprejudiced thoughts of Death. They have all the same natural weaknesses and passions, as the rest of makind; nor was their divine Master himself without them, in the days of his flesh; but then, as by his most perfect example they are taught, so by that higher, that supernatural Principle which he

communicates to them, they are enabled to direct, to controul, and govern them.

God hath not ſeen fit to exempt them from the Fear of Death, but he hath mercifully provided againſt the exceſſes of this Fear; having, by the goſpel-revelation, drawn aſide the veil from before the glories of the upper world, and continually weakening their alliance with the world here below, by the various troubles and calamities, which, under his wiſe direction, befall them in it. Hence the attractions of the heavenly felicity come to be more ſenſibly felt, the leſs there is to oppoſe and counteract them; and finding ſo many things to wean them from this ſtrange land, like weary pilgrims they are more willing to return into their own country, though the valley of Death muſt be paſt in the way to it. So remarkably does the Providence of God conſpire with the encouraging doctrines and promiſes of his Word, to aſſiſt us in our conqueſt of a Paſſion, which, when it prevails, is one of the greateſt enemies to the repoſe of the mind, and the tranquillity and happineſs of life.

You have, Madam, *been made to poſſeſs months of ſorrow, been brought low, almoſt within ſight of the grave by a ſickneſs of your own; and have, as it were, entered it in one, who was a part of yourſelf, and not more dear to you, through the ſtrong workings of parental affection, than for thoſe recommending qualities by which ſhe ingaged the eſteem*

of

of all her acquaintance. If I ſay that I ſincerely ſympathize with you, I do not pretend to any merit herein; ſince by the many obligations which you have laid me under, and, if you will give me leave to publiſh my happineſs, by the honour and advantage of your friendſhip, you have left me without all power to do otherwiſe.

But, Madam, *there is at preſent this additional reaſon for my mingling ſorrows with you, that I have been lately touched in the ſame tender part. Shall we ſay, as an afflicted Parent once did, that we will go down to our children to the grave mourning? Rather, let us comfort ourſelves with the reviving hope that we ſhall one day meet them in a better world than this which they have left. They were hardly entered into the field of battle, and are already more than conquerors, through him who loved them. And do we grieve at the ſhortneſs of their conflict? Or envy them the eaſy acquiſition of their crown? If they knew our ſorrows, and were indulged a viſit to our world, would they not be ready to chide us for our intemperate lamentations, and to ſay, weep not for us, who are above your pity, and ſhould not thank you for your tears, but as they are marks of a well-meaning, tho' miſtaken love, but rather weep for yourſelves, who are ſtill ſailing on a tempeſtuous ſea, expoſed to numberleſs perils, and combating with doubts and fears, and tempta-*

tions, with diſeaſes and Death? Yet let not any troubles you meet with in the world make you forget the many reaſons you have to be ſatisfied with the diſpenſations of divine Providence, and to rejoyce in the believing views of the heavenly reſt.

That God, who hath hitherto helped you, may ſtill be your guide, and ſanctify to you both the injoyments and afflictions of life, and by his multiplied bleſſings on your ſurviving offspring, increaſe your comfort in them, ſhall be the conſtant Prayer of,

MADAM,

Your moſt obliged,

Humble Servant,

Taunton, March 20, 1727-8.

HENRY GROVE.

SERMON VII.

The Fear of Death a natural Paſſion.

ISAIAH XXXVIII. 3.

-----And Hezekiah wept ſore.

WHEN we conſider the character of *Hezekiah*, as a perſon equally eminent for his piety and his high ſtation, together with the age of his life, when this, which is related of him in the text, happened, we ſhall be ready to wonder at his behaviour on this occaſion. Being on his ſick-bed, the Prophet *Iſaiah* is ſent to him with this meſſage from God, *Set thine houſe in order, for thou ſhalt die, and not live*; thy diſtemper is in its nature mortal, and beyond the reach of human remedies, ſo that, without a miracle of Providence in thy favour, thou hath nothing to count upon but Death. A meſſage ſo unexpected and ſo awfully delivered

puts this good man into ſuch diſorder, that he immediately loſes all command of himſelf, and burſts into a flood of tears. The King of *Judah*, in whom a greatneſs of ſoul might have been expected, ſuitable to that of his condition, *wept* to hear that he muſt die. A Saint of the firſt rank, who was able to appeal to his all-knowing Judge, *Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy ſight!* and who, conſequently, had ground to hope for a life of bleſſedneſs to come, over which Death hath no power, *wept ſore* when told that he muſt reſign this periſhing, momentary life. One advanced to the middle ſtage or period of human life, being now near upon forty years old, (at what time men have uſually reaſon and experience to convince them, eſpecially being no longer blinded by their youthful paſſions, that the hope of an earthly happineſs is no better than an idle dream) is grieved beyond meaſure that he muſt leave a world, which, upon repeated trial, he had found to be, at the beſt, empty and vain.

How ſhall we account for all this? Shall we think that *Hezekiah* having at this time no Son to ſucceed him, was concerned for the unſettled ſtate which the nation was like to fall into after his deceaſe? But had this been the thing that chiefly lay upon his mind,

mind, though, I confeſs, it would not have been any way unbecoming him to deſire longer life, yet I do not ſee why his deſire of it upon ſo generous a principle ſhould expreſs itſelf in ſuch a profuſion of tears, which ſeem to be the language of the more weak, and tender paſſions. And, indeed, if we read the writing which *Hezekiah* compoſed after his recovery, we ſhall have no reaſon to queſtion that the love of life lay at the bottom of all this lamentation; *I ſaid in the cuting off of my days, I ſhall go to the gates of the grave, I am deprived of the reſidue of my years. I ſaid, I ſhall not ſee the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living: I ſhall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world*, &c. It is not unlikely, that if he had had time to recollect himſelf, and his diſeaſe had allowed of it, he would have received the tidings with a greater compoſure of mind, and decency of outward behaviour: but being taken at a ſurprize, and when his mind was ſunk, and clouded, with the diſorder of his body, nature betrayed itſelf, before he was able to put a reſtraint upon it, and to make uſe of the ſuccours of Reaſon and Faith.

That natural courage, or contempt of Danger and Death, for which ſome men are admired, depends very much on the ſtate of the body, and other accidental circumſtances; inſomuch that if the pulſe beat low, the

ſpirits languiſh, and thoſe things which uſed to animate them are out of the way, their courage preſently ſeems to have forſaken them, the Fear of Death, which was thought to have no place in ſuch perſons, revives, and it appears they are like other men, poor, weak, and timorous mortals. Thus *David*, who, when but a youth, and keeper of his father's ſheep, ſnatched a lamb *out of the mouth of the lion and the bear*; and afterwards freely hazarded his life *in the high places of the field*; this ſame *David*, when ſickneſs had enfeebled him, and made him an eaſy conqueſt for Death, flies before an enemy which he had ſo often challenged and defied. [a] *O ſpare me, that I may recover ſtrength, before I go hence and be no more!* From whence I ſhall obſerve that

The Fear of Death is a natural Paſſion.

Grace is the beſt preſervative againſt this, and other infirmities of nature, but *Grace* is not always a perfect cure. Indeed the paſſion is not to be rooted out; but, by proper methods, may be governed, and kept under, as to create us very little diſturbance. As a *natural Paſſion* the Fear of Death is of great uſe, and wiſely deſigned by our Maker, as it is probable, among other ends, for theſe two, *viz.* the maintaining and ſtrengthen-

[a] Pſal. xxxix. 13.

ſtrengthening the belief of a future life—and making men more ſollicitous to provide for it.

1. The Fear of Death was planted in nature as a guard on the notion of a life to come, and a conſiderable ſupport to the belief of it. Had there been no future ſtate, it is very probable the Creator of man would have ſo formed him, as to recompenſe the ſhortneſs of his life by its greater freedom from diſquietude while it laſted, that he might have had all the pleaſure that life could afford him, without the ſecret ſting which he now finds in the thoughts of Death; he would not have been haunted by a paſſion, which, ſeparated from all hope of any happineſs hereafter, renders his condition in ſome reſpects more miſerable than that of the beaſts of the field; but, like them, would have injoyed the preſent, and not troubled himſelf about the future. Thus, if there had been no future ſtate, is it probable man would have been made.

And, on the other hand, had he been ſo made, without any Fear of Death mixed in his natural temper, it is reaſonable to think, that too many would have concluded that there was no future ſtate, no life after this; their preſent exiſtence would have ſo far ſatisfied them, that they would not have dreaded the end of it; and, being ſatisfied with it, they would have expected nothing further, eſteeming the goodneſs and wiſdom of

of God ſufficiently manifeſted in a life of a few years continuance. That we might not be tempted to take up with ſuch thoughts, to the Love of Life is added an equal Fear of Death; and theſe twin paſſions together give us notice of ſome other ſtate of things beſides the preſent. We naturally ſtretch our thoughts and our deſires beyond our little ſpan, and are diſpoſed to believe a thing ſo agreeable to our Reaſon, and our Inclinations too, as a world to come; at leaſt, till we have ſined a way all hope of our being happy there.

2. Another end which the Fear of Death ſerves is to make men more ſollicitous to provide for it. What we dread, as well as what we love, is apt to return into our minds. It may be we are not willing to think of it, we ſtudiouſly indeavour to forget it, but, whether we will or no, it comes in our way, and makes us take notice of it. It is ſo in the caſe before us; we fear Death, and becauſe we fear it, the melancholy, the diſagreeable image is continually croſing our view. How often do the very pleaſures and injoyments of life give occaſion to the thoughts of Death? Are my circumſtances eaſy and plentiful? Do I ſpend my days in mirth? How natural, and ſometimes unavoidable, is the reflection, Death, which I ſo much fear, is at hand, and Death will put an end to my mirth, and make me

as

as poor as the pooreſt of mankind? Hence it is, that in the midſt of laughter, or, if not then, yet, as ſoon as it is paſt, and we have leiſure for a ſober thought, the heart is ſorrowful. Happy for many, that it is ſo, ſince, by this ſadneſs and penſiveneſs, their hearts have been made better.

So again, the numerous examples of mortality, and more eſpecially the warnings we have of it in ourſelves, recall the thoughts of Death; and theſe thoughts, being of a thing we fear, are not alway ſo eaſily baniſhed, as they might be, if they were indifferent to us; in that caſe, as they would be leſs frequent, ſo more ſlight, and vaniſhing. Now it is many times this natural thoughtfulneſs about Death that gives the firſt check to the motions of a vain, a ſenſual, an earthly heart, and teaches it ſobriety and moderation. Alas, what is all the glory of the world, when the imagination hath ſpread the ſhadow of Death over it? What is ſenſual pleaſure, or worldly wealth, when we conſider that they will be paſt and gone with this life? And thus the Fear of Death, by ſuggeſting the thoughts of it, and making thoſe thoughts more weighty and piercing is exceeding ſerviceable to us. As it is further, by ſeting our thoughts and meditations on work concerning the beſt methods of oppoſing and qualifying theſe fears. Shall my Soul have no reſt from the alarms of this trou-

troubleſome paſſion, be never able to ſurmount it? O wretched man that I am! Who ſhall deliver me from this Fear of Death? Here Religion kindly offers relief, the relief of its doctrines and promiſes, which, under the ſecret and powerful influences of the Spirit of life, do, in concurrence with its own fears, diſpoſe the ſoul to liſten to the voice of wiſdom; ſo that the man, who was before given up to vanity, turns his thoughts to the concerns of eternity; and the good man minds them with greater ſerioufneſs and application. And thus, where there is a promiſe of life, as there is under the Goſpel, and men by a continued courſe of wilful and heinous ſin have not quenched the Spirit of God, and deſtroyed their hopes of mercy; that is, as a *natural Paſſion*, the Fear of Death hath a moſt ſalutary tendency, making them flee for refuge to the hope that is ſet before them.

In the further conſideration of this point, I ſhall

I. Inquire what it is in Death that makes it ſo unpleaſing to nature; or what the principal grounds are of that averſion, which men naturally have to Death.

II. Propoſe a few Rules, or Directions, which may be of uſe to reconcile us to the thoughts of Death notwithſtanding the reluctance and oppoſition of nature againſt it.

I. I

I. I ſhall inquire what are the principal grounds of that averſion which all men naturally have to Death; and, under each head, ſuggeſt ſuch thoughts, by way of relief, as tend to quiet and eſtabliſh the heart, in reſpect of that particular ground of trouble.

1. We therefore fear Death becauſe it is our departure out of this world, which is our native place. The world hath been the abode of mankind for many ages, they were the firſt inhabitants of the country, earth-formed, and not tranſplanted, in the manner of a colony, from ſome other part of the creation. The firſt man was taken out of the duſt of the ground, and had his habitation aſſigned him where he had his original. And though he and his deſcendants have ſucceſſively been tranſported into unſeen and diſtant regions, yet what children they had were all born to them before they left this world. The earth is our common mother; we come naked from her womb, and are caſt helpleſs on her lap, ſhe is the nurſe of our infancy, ſupplies all the delights of our childhood, and youth, and too often of our more rational, and advanced age. Here we firſt enter upon Being; here we firſt draw vital air; here the light firſt ſalutes our eyes, and our other ſenſes are entertained with their

their ſeveral objects; here we learn to ſpeak and go, to think and reaſon; in a word, all we know of life comes either immediately, or remotely from our acquaintance with this world, into which we grow from our earlieſt years. And it is no wonder if all this begets a particular fondneſs for the place of our birth. A man's native country hath always attractives for him, how deſtitute ſoever of them in the opinion of others. *Hadad* the *Edomite* having made his eſcape into *Egypt* in the ſlaughter of his countrymen by *Joab*, though he was as well received by the king as he could deſire, and matched into the royal family, and though he was but a child when firſt driven from his home; yet no ſooner heard that *David* and *Joab* were both dead, but he prepared for his return, and to *Pharaoh*, who expoſtulated the matter with him, aſking him [b] *whether he lacked any thing with him that he ſought to go to his own country*, anſwered, *nothing, however let me go in any wiſe.*

Death hath naturally the appearance of a melancholy baniſhment from our home, and the more melancholy, becauſe it muſt one time or other be ſubmited to by all.

All this is very true; but all this ſhould move me little, when I conſider that every real chriſtian is *born again*; and by virtue of his *new birth*, which is from above, becomes

[b] 1 Kings xi. 15, &c.

comes related to a new world, and as it were, loſes the relation he before had to this. Heaven is as truly the country of holy ſouls, their city, their home, as if they had been born there; they are naturalized to it; not by a legal change only, or a change in their name or outward ſtate, but properly, by their being *made partakers of a divine nature.* [c] *Ye are not of the world, but I have choſen you out of the world.* You know who ſpake theſe words, and to whom they were ſpoken. The diſciples of Jeſus have left the world to follow him. In the world they are ſtrangers and pilgrims, and do ſo account themſelves, as well as are often ſo treated by the world; *they deſire* and ſeek *a country, even an heavenly*, having their faces, and their hearts Zion-ward, thither they are continually tending, there is their reſt, long wiſhed for, but never found, till they come there; how great ſoever be the diſtance between, they have [d] *their converſation in heaven*, and which is a yet bolder expreſſion, [e] *their dwelling place in God.* The laſt moment of their lives, like the laſt ſtep of a weariſome journey, ſets their feet within the gates of the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, and brings them to their father's houſe: or, if you will, Death doth no more than tranſlate them from one manſion of the divine preſence, to another more bliſsful and glo-

[c] John xv. 19. [d] Phil. iii. 20. [e] Pſal. xc. 1.

glorious; from the preſence of God here on earth, which they know only by *faith*, to his preſence in heaven, of which they are aſſured by *ſight*.

A learned and good man,* when in his laſt moments mention was made of the celeſtial city, with trembling lips, and dying voice, not to be heard without difficulty, ſpake to his friends that ſtood by, after this manner. We read of the city *Jeruſalem*, that it was divided into two parts, the upper, and the lower; the upper, in which were mount Zion, the holy temple, and the king's palace, was inhabited by the tribe of *Levi*, and the royal family; the lower by the people, who from thence aſcended to thoſe ſacred abodes: by which figure this pious man would have us to conceive the double ſtate of the church, the true *Jeruſalem*, and *mother of us all*, to be delineated. We, who are in this earthly valley, being as yet in the kingdom of grace only, but, as many of us as are *made kings and prieſts unto God by Jeſus Chriſt*, in due time do aſcend to the *Jeruſalem above*, where is our enrolment, and our fixed ſeat. So great was the ſatisfaction which this holy man, juſt upon the point of leaving this ſinful world, had in the view of that glorious world, to which he was related, and where he was now about to enter, and for ever dwell.

2. When

* *Druſius*, as it is related in his Life.

2. When we leave the world at Death, we not only leave the place, but all that is dear to us in it. [f] *As we came forth of our mother's womb, naked ſhall we return, to go as we came, and ſhall take nothing of our labour, which we may carry in our hand.* Afflicted *Job*, the wife author of [g] *Eccleſiaſtes*, and the [h] Apoſtle *Paul*, do all ſpeak this language. Death diſſolves the neareſt, ſtrongeſt ties of nature and friendſhip; hath no regard to all the names of endearment among men, ſuch as *parents* and *children*, *brother* and *ſiſter*, *huſband* and *wife*; tares us from the embraces of thoſe that loved us, and thoſe whom we loved; takes us away while they are weeping around us. *I ſhall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world*, is the mournful complaint of *Hezekiah*. *Lover and friend ſhall be put far from me, and my acqaintance into darkneſs.* I muſt be ſtriped bare of all my worldly goods, be thrown out of all. Whatever I injoyed, whatever I called mine, whatever I admired, or doated upon, muſt be left; I muſt bid a long adieu to all. Theſe are killing thoughts to ſuch as have ſet their affections on things here below. And O how ſmall is the number of thoſe that have not! How few can we find whom the earth does not hold faſt to itſelf by ſome powerful alliance, ſome ſecret fondneſſes, and attachments! The affection

[f] Job i. 21. [g] Eccleſ. v. 15. [h] 1 Tim. vi. 7.

is twiſted with their very ſouls, ſo that a ſeparation is not to be made without the utmoſt violence and pain. As a perſon, whoſe heart is on ſhore, among his beloved relations, and acquaintance, and his old delights, takes his leave of them again, and again, puts to ſea unwillingly, and, while the ſhip carries him at a diſtance from them, is not able to remove his eyes till they are no longer to be ſeen, ſo do we commonly part from this world; we know not how to bid our laſt farewell, we would fain linger a little longer, take another view of this and that object, and ſhould hardly ever conſent to part, did not Death force us away, and cloſe our eyes in eternal darkneſs.

But now if I conſider this matter as a *chriſtian*, what ſhould make me ſo exceeding loth to quit my earthly friends, and intereſts? Is it that the world I am going to is a deſart, barren place, without ſociety, and without pleaſures? Or becauſe they are inferior to thoſe of this lower world? Neither of theſe can be pretended. Heaven hath its ſociety, and that ſociety glorious and divine; its pleaſures, and thoſe pleaſures pure and entrancing. The *ſociety* are *an innumerable company of angels, the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born, and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect*, united by mutual love, and the moſt intire conformity of holy inclinations, under *Jeſus the mediator of the new*

new covenant, and by him *to God* the fountain and *judge of all.* And I do not ſuppoſe that any of my chriſtian friends here below will think I undervalue them, if I ſay that their ſociety, even that of the beſt of them, and in their beſt moments, is low and worthleſs, when compared with this. The pleaſures are the greateſt that can flow from the compleat injoyment of God the ſupreme good, and of all other inferior good things heaped together, that have any ſuitableneſs to the powers and capacities of our exalted nature; inſomuch that not the leaſt void will be left in the happy ſoul, not a ſingle deſire unſatisfied, not a ſingle ſenſe, or faculty unimployed to its utmoſt extent. All they, *whoſe names are writen in heaven*, are free of this ſociety while they live here on earth; but Death alone actually joins them to it, and admits them into the full participation of the ſame joys. And certainly that perſon is not worthy of all this happineſs, who does not think it worth dying for.

3. The manner of leaving the world, by the Soul's going out of the Body, which is implied in Death, increaſeth the ſad difficulty of parting. Could we be tranſlated without ſeeing Death, put off mortality, and not put off the Body, as thoſe ſaints ſhall do, who are found alive at the laſt day, it would be ſome mitigation of the ſentence, a

little ſoftening of its terror. But, alas, I ſhall not only go as naked out of the world, as I came into it, but more ſo: at my entrance into this life my Soul was cloathed, though my Body was not; at Death this garment of fleſh muſt be laid aſide, and my Soul be found naked. The addition which this makes to the terrors of Death is intimated by the Apoſtle *Paul*, when he ſays, that [1] *we who are in this tabernacle do groan being burthened; not that we would be uncloathed, but cloathed upon, that mortality might be ſwallowed up of life.* We could be glad to be diſpenſed from this way of exchanging this mortal life for one that is immortal.

When I leave the earth, muſt I leave my Body to mingle with it? Muſt the houſe, where my Soul hath dwelt, be abandoned, its form defaced, its organs become uſeleſs, the admirable frame and contexture of its parts be diſſolved, and hideous deformity, and loathſome putrefaction overſpread the whole? At the very thought of it, I am a terror to myſelf; I mourn over my Body as a man over his friend who is condemned to Death, and waiting in dreadful ſuſpence the fatal warrant that orders his execution. Methinks, could I but be allowed to take my Body with me, I ſhould depart more contented; the preſence of my old companion would ſweeten my exile, that I ſhould not

[1] 2 Cor. v. 4.

not be ſo ſenſible of the want of my other friends: but theſe two boſom acquaintance, who had almoſt all their pleaſures and pains in common, who rejoiced and mourned together, muſt be divided, and one of them alone outlive the ſeparation. Thus does nature lament herſelf on this foreſeen change, in terms of the greateſt diſtreſs.

And hath *Grace* nothing to reply? Yes, abundantly enough to adminiſter comfort to any one but the mere *natural* man. When my Body is laid in the grave, there will at once be an end of all the diſeaſes, and pains of the Body, of its hunger, and thirſt, and wearineſs, for *there the weary are at reſt.* And my Soul, if cleanſed and ſanctified by the blood of Jeſus, and the Spirit of God, will find no want of ſuch a Body as this, have no cauſe to regret a ſeparation, which delivers it from the darkneſs, the confinement, and filth of a priſon, into the ſpacious regions of pure and heavenly light; deſtroys every corruption, perfects every grace, diſpels every doubt, and puts it out of the reach of every temptation. And how is the Soul a loſer in all this? The Soul, it is true, was made for a ſtate of union with the Body; but not with ſuch a Body as this. The Body of innocent man was very different from this Body of Sin and Death; and ſo, and indeed much more, will the Body of the glorified Saint be. As the tabernacle

in the wilderneſs did not more exceed the tent of the meaneſt *Iſraelite* than the Body before the fall the Body ſince; ſo the ſame tabernacle was not more ſurpaſſed by the temple of *Solomon* in all its glory, than the human Body, in its firſt and beſt eſtate, will fall ſhort of the Body raiſed to honour and immortality. Of which bleſſed reſurrection the Souls of the righteous having a certain proſpect, rejoice therein; ſo tranſported with their preſent condition, and with looking to the things that are before them, as to forget the things that are behind, the life which they once led in the Body, and the Body itſelf, which they bequeathed to worms, and duſt. It was this ſupported that *Young Gentlewoman*, whoſe much lamented Death is the occaſion of this Funeral Diſcourſe, in her dying moments, being heard, juſt before ſhe expired, expreſſing her triumph over Death in thoſe moving lines of the excellent Dr. *Watts*, which begin

* *And muſt this Body die?*

The morning of the reſurrection, though beheld only afar off by Faith, darting its reviving beams a-croſs the dark valley of Death, ſo as to ſcatter the gloomy ſhades, and to give ſufficient ground for the application of thoſe words of the prophet, [k] *In the evening time it ſhall be light.* Here it was ſo, the very

* Hymn 110. B. ii. [k] Zech. xiv. 7.

very moment, if I may ſo ſay, before the laſt remains of life's ſhort day were ſwallowed up in the black night of Death. Bleſſed be God, who, in this ſenſe, maketh the outgoings of the evening to rejoice.

4. The country we remove into, when we depart out of this world, is in great meaſure unknown to us; only we know that our way and kind of life there muſt be quite different from what we are accuſtomed to on earth; this makes us more averſe to dying. There is little communication between that inviſible world and ours; we have no intelligence, no advice, as we call it, from thence. Notwithſtanding the many thouſands that continually travel thither, we never receive any account of their reception there, of the products of the country (if I may ſo expreſs it) and the cuſtoms and laws of the inhabitants; we have none ſent to us with a meſſage from the dead. After all the diſcoveries of the other world by one who had lived there, before he came down into this, thoſe remote regions lie very much in the dark, and we muſt viſit them ourſelves to be able to deſcribe them. It is true, if our own Reaſon was under more uncertainty than it is about theſe matters, yet the Goſpel would not permit us to doubt of a ſtate after Death, and that it is, in general, either very happy, or very miſerable. Nay, from the Goſpel we learn further,

that the bleſſedneſs of the righteous conſiſts in the viſion, or injoyment of God, and the miſery of the wicked in being eternally ſeparated from him; but ſhould we preſs to know particulars, *it does not yet appear what* the one or the other *ſhall be.* Should it be aſked, how they live; we are able to return little more in anſwer than this, that the Soul diveſted of the Body muſt find itſelf in a very different condition from one that is ſhut up in it; muſt perceive and remember, feel pleaſure and pain, act and be acted upon, after quite another manner; that there can be none of thoſe arts, thoſe occupations and delights which belong to the ſons of men, becauſe there is no foundation for them, all theſe things being grafted on the life of the Body. See here one reaſon of our backwardneſs to leave this world! We know this world, but we do not know the next; we have tried this life, but the future is hiden from us, and wherein it differs from this, we are not in haſte to make the experiment. When perſons that are about to ſettle in a foreign land are at their liberty where to fix, they commonly make choice of a place they are tolerably acquainted with before hand, by hiſtorical accounts of it, and where things are in the main like thoſe that have been familiar to them, only better, if it may be, in the ſame kind that ſo the ſimilitude of food, and diſpoſitions, and laws and language,

guage, and manners, may help them in deceiving themſelves with a pleaſing imagination, that they are at home in their own country.

But, O my Soul, ſhall I ſuffer myſelf to be impoſed upon by ſuch fooliſh prejudices, as theſe? Shall that make me flee from Death, which ought to increaſe my deſire of it? Death conveys me to a ſtate of happineſs; this I know, if I know myſelf to be in a ſtate of grace now; and with the ſame degree of ſatisfaction, and aſſurance; but the particular ingredients of this happineſs I do not ſo clearly apprehend. And ſhould not that curioſity, which is ſo natural to mankind, and the ſpring of ſo many and ſuch unwearied inquiries, work as much more ſtrongly in this caſe than in any other, as the curioſity is more commendable, and we are here more certain of having it gratified to the full?

What thoughtful, contemplative mind would not willingly know after what manner angels, and ſeparate ſpirits philoſophize? What are the bounds of their knowledge? Or whether their knowledge hath properly any fixed bounds at all? In what caſes they diſcover truth by a chain of reaſonings; and in what by immediate intuition? And what peculiar helps and advantages they injoy for both theſe? What holy Soul would not willingly know what it is to be made perfect

fect in holineſs? To have no inclinations to evil? And none that are faint and languid to that which is good? To have that light, and pleaſure from the Preſence of God, and the moſt liberal communications from him flow, in full tides, into the ſoul; the tranſient glimpſes, and ſmall foretaſtes of which are ſo incomparably ſweet and delightful? To be thoroughly inflamed with the love of God, and intirely ſatisfied with his likeneſs? What Soul, bowed down with infirmities, benighted with ſorrows, perplexed with doubts and fears, would not willingly know, what it is to be compleatly freed from all theſe? That the happineſs of heaven, after all the accounts and deſcriptions of it, remains for the moſt part unknown, only proves its greatneſs and excellence. The words which the Apoſtle *Paul* heard in his rapture to *Paradiſe* were ἄρρητα, *unſpeakable*, not capable of being uttered, or made intelligible to mortals, through the ſcantineſs of human language, and the weakneſs of human conceptions; ſo *the things that God hath prepared for them that love him, have not entered into the heart of man*; and the reaſon is, that *eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard* any things that are like them.

This world does not ſo much as afford reſemblances, and compariſons, by which heavenly things may be tolerably explained, and repreſented; ſo diſſimilar is their nature,

and

and ſo unmeaſurable the diſproportion between things below and things above. It was a great advance for thoſe that were born blind to be endowed by our Saviour with a new ſenſe, and the nobleſt of all the ſenſes, which nature had denied them. What an addition did this make to the dominions of the mind---The change that happens to the Soul of a good man, paſſing out of this mortal life, is ſtill more ſurprizing, and more for its improvement, and advantage. Are the immenſe ſpaces of the heavens, with all their hoſts, as it were, loſt to one, whoſe want of ſight confines his knowledge to the few objects that he can touch with his hand? In like manner, there are ten thouſand things concealed from the moſt knowing ſpirit while it it pent up in fleſh, which, upon its inlargement, are immediately diſcovered to it; much as upon opening the window of the eye, which had been ſtoped up before, the Soul hath liberty to look abroad, and in viſion to range thro' the heavens, the earth, and the ſea. And that which ſhould raiſe our notion of the future ſtate ſtill higher, and inflame our deſire of injoying it is this, that our other ſenſes, narrow as they are, bear more proportion to the ſight, than the ſight, which is ſo much more extenſive than the other ſenſes, does to thoſe new ways of knowledge and fruition which Death opens to the pious Soul,

Soul, ſet free from its confinement in the Body.

5. Death is our removal out of this world, without all hope of a return. *We go hence, and are no more.* This makes me ready to ſay, *O remember that my life is wind! Mine eye ſhall no more ſee good; the eye of him that hath ſeen me ſhall ſee me no more; thine eyes are upon me and I am not. As the cloud is conſumed and vaniſheth away, ſo he that goeth down to the grave ſhall come up no more, he ſhall return no more to his houſe, neither ſhall his place know him any more. Therefore I will not refrain my mouth,* but will aſk, *why haſt thou made my days as an hand's breath, and my age is as nothing before thee? I will ſpeak in the anguiſh of my ſpirit, I will complain in the bitterneſs of my ſoul.* A thouſand doors open out of this life, but not one into it from the dark territories of the grave. To thoſe who love this world, there is ſomething very ſhocking in the thought, that they muſt be everlaſtingly divorced from it. It is one thing to travel for *diverſion*, or out of *curioſity*, to ſee ſtrange cities and countries; another to be thruſt from home by a ſentence of baniſhment, forbiding us ever to reviſit our native ſhore. *Death is a perpetual exile.* The ſame ſun ſets and riſes, the ſame waters are emptied into the ſea, and from thence borrowed again to ſupply the rivers; and thus continue in an endleſs cir-

circulation, but the ſame life is never renewed. *The days of darkneſs are many*; the grave devours all and reſtores none, till the general judgment, when men ſhall riſe indeed, but not to dwell any more, as they now do, on the face of the earth.

And what is there ſo very dreadful in this ſentence, that *man, when he dieth, ſhall return no more into this world?* If applied to the regenerate, the true meaning of it when explained is really this. They ſhall no more come back to a world, where *the day of their death was better than the day of their birth*; to the region of *ſin and vanity*, of *trouble, diſtraction, changes*, and *death*. When they are ſettled in the promiſed land, they ſhall never be condemned a ſecond time to tread this howling wilderneſs; when returned from a *ſeventy year's captivity*, (for ſuch is life to them that draw it out ſo long, and in proportion to others who live a leſs time, tho' the hardſhips and oppreſſions are generally greateſt, as in the bondage of *Egypt*, towards the end of it; I ſay, when returned to their country) they ſhall never go into captivity more. They never again put on their old ſhackles; never again repeat their old miſtakes; never again commence their old warfare. They behold the face of God; and ſhall always behold it; they are with Jeſus, and ſhall be ever with him; they injoy a heaven of delights, and ſhall eternally

nally injoy it; they have the company of all thoſe holy Souls that are gone before, or that follow, as they are continually added to the church triumphant, and ſhall have it forever. Some of the heathens had a notion, that Souls exiſted before their deſcent into the Body; and when the time appointed was come for their entering into human life, they were obliged (according to the ingenious allegory of the * Poet) to drink of a river, whoſe waters had a quality to make them forget all that was paſt; to the end they might be willing to put on an earthly Body, and ſubmit to the inconveniencies of this mortal life. If the Soul of *Lazarus*, in the interval between his death, and his ſecond life, to which he was raiſed by our Saviour, mingled with the bleſſed ſpirits above, nothing but his ſubmiſſion to the will of God could make him contented to forego their happy ſociety, and take up a load he had laid down; unleſs we ſuppoſe him to forget all that happened to him in his ſeparate ſtate, ſo as to awake from Death, no otherwiſe than if it had been an ordinary ſleep. After *St. Paul* had been raped up into the *third heavens*, he had hardly patience to ſtay his appointed time in the Body.

6. The circumſtances that Death is ſometimes attended with, render its viſits improper in the apprehenſions of nature, and therefore

* Virgil. Æneid. l. 6.

fore unwelcome. Of this kind are the circumſtances of time; I mean the time of life, and place; which I the rather mention, becauſe the affecting inſtance of the frailty and uncertainty of life we have lately had leads me to it. We have ſeen a moſt promiſing life cut off in its begining; One *deſervedly* dear to her Friends and Relatives, for her accompliſhments of body and mind, crowned with religion, ſnatched at once from life, and them. And we cannot wonder when decrepit age would fain hide itſelf from Death; and *Hezekiah*, who had ſeen the beſt of life, and was in the ſtrength of his Reaſon, declined its ſummons; we cannot, I ſay, juſtly wonder, that the Young do not often run to meet its embraces. The ſtruggle between Life and Death is never harder than when Life is in its prime and vigour. Young Perſons like what they have ſeen of the world ſo well, that they deſire to be better acquainted with it; little imagining that the better acquainted with it they are, the leſs they ſhall admire it, and have the deeper conviction of its emptineſs. They would advance further into the country, and fondly fancy they ſhall diſcover new ſcenes of delight, and find what will be more and more entertaining. There is not a greater flatterer than hope; nor are there any more eaſy to be flattered and deluded by it than Young Perſons; for their judgments being yet but weak, their experience

rience little, their disappointments few, their passions strong, and their imaginations warm and lively, they are generally credulous, apt to have a good opinion of whatever gratifies their inclinations, to believe every thing, and to expect every thing. And how can the thoughts of Death be naturally otherwise than unacceptable to those, who have so quick a relish of the pleasures of life, and gay prospect from it?

But neither is this case without its proper consolations. " For (that I may speak first in the person of the Young themselves) " may I, or must I die in the flower of " my days? If it be so decreed by the wise " and gracious God, I submit; and the " more readily, because what the remaining " part of my line would be, if drawn out " to a greater length, I cannot tell: *Days* " *should speak, and multitude of years should* " *teach wisdom*; and if I hearken to those " who are much older than myself, and " whose judgments have been ripened by " experience, they all agree, that life is like " a cloud which appears beautifully coloured, " but is made up all of vapours, and en- " genders thunder, and lightening, and tem- " pest, and that the world never makes good " what it promises. The younger I die, " the more innocent, and the sooner shall I " be possessed of my reward; the less time " is allotted me in the world, the less time

" there

" there is for ſin to dwell in me, and the " leſs will be my portion of trouble."

Theſe and ſuch like thoughts may help to ſatisfy the *religious* Young. And for the *Friends* of ſuch, who have already paſt a good part of the tireſome road, and know the unpleaſantneſs of it, the difficulty of finding the right way amidſt the crowds that go wrong, the ſnares, and dangers, and ill-treatment, that the traveller is expoſed to, who have tried the world, and found it to be vanity and vexation of ſpirit; they, ſurely, have great reaſon, when fearing, or lamenting, the untimely Death of a Young Relative, to moderate their fears or ſorrows, not knowing what events the following part of life's hiſtory might have been filled with; and knowing but too well the great likelihood that they would at beſt have been unſatisfying; and not anſwer expectation.

As for the circumſtance of place, we may die at a conſiderable diſtance from home, which was the caſe of that *Young Gentlewoman* whom ſome of us attended, this laſt week, part of her ſad journey to the tomb, where ſhe is gathered to her fathers, and muſt ſee corruption with them. We know not the place where, any more than the time when, and the manner how, we ſhall die. We go abroad never to return; an ambuſh is laid for us on the road, or the end of our journey proves the end of our

lives. This ſhould teach us not to be eagerly ſet on our deſigns, nor to propoſe too much to ourſelves in them; to regard it as our wiſdom, wherever we are, to be in a readineſs for Death, and to act upon a ſuppoſition that it may arreſt us. And it is a ſatisfaction, that if we are prepared, the place where we happen to leave the world makes no difference, and is one of the laſt things we ſhould trouble ourſelves about. Perhaps we may be at home; perhaps abroad; perhaps in the midſt of our Friends; perhaps among ſtrangers. As Death is of all places and countries, ſo God is every where preſent, and every where the diſtance is the ſame from earth to heaven, and the paſſage equally ſafe. And if the Friends of ſuch as die at a diſtance are deſirous of having them laid with their kindred duſt, it cannot be ſuppoſed to proceed from a belief that the Dead are any way benefited by it, or affected with it: in this ſenſe, we may ſay, as the * *Philoſopher* did, who being on his travels, and aſked by his friends, whether, if any thing happened to him, he would be carried home to his own country, to the place of his birth, replied, *No matter; the way to the Elyſian fields* (in the chriſtian language to *Heaven) is the ſame from one place to another.* O my Soul, only chuſe God for thy portion, and heaven for thy home, and give all diligence that thou be found in Chriſt, and

* Cicer. Tuſc. Qu. l. 1. S. 43.

and thou mayeſt reſt intirely eaſy, when and whereſoever Death preſents itſelf to thee. I have read of a good man * that uſed often to ſay, " That if he was to chuſe a place " to die in, it ſhould be in an Inn; it look- " ing like a pilgrim's going home, to whom " this world was all as an Inn, and who was " weary of the noiſe, and confuſion of it." He added, " That the officious tenderneſs " and care of Friends was an intanglement " to a dying man, and that the unconcerned " attendance of thoſe that could be pro- " cured in ſuch a place (*wherein the caſe* " *of the Deceaſed was not at all like, hav-* " *ing a tender Mother, and other Relations* " *and Acquaintance about her)* would give " leſs diſturbance "; and he obtained what he deſired. —— Thus have I conſidered the principal grounds of that averſion which men *naturally* have to Death; and under each head have ſuggeſted ſuch thoughts and reflections, as tend to quiet the heart in reſpect of that particular ground of trouble.

I have not ſaid any thing of that fear, which the idea of Death excites as an introduction to a ſtate of miſery and puniſhment, becauſe this is not a *merely natural*, but *guilty* fear; ariſing from the apprehenſion, whether true or falſe, of unpardoned guilt, which, being grafted on our natural fears,

* Bp. *Leighton.* See *Burnet*'s Hiſtory of his Life and Times.

makes the fruit, which before was only sour, change its kind, and become poisonous.

II. Give me leave to propose a few Rules or Directions, which may be of use to reconcile us to the thoughts of Death, notwithstanding all the reluctance, and opposition of nature against it. And here the most general and comprehensive Rule is, that we make the comforts, mentioned under the several foregoing particulars, our own; that we put it out of all reasonable doubt that they are so; and that, on the one hand, we observe and practise whatever may promote, and, on the other hand, carefully avoid every thing that may hinder the genuine influence and effect of them upon our minds: for there is nothing wanting in these comforts, to render them an over-ballance to our fears, if there be nothing wanting on our part, either as to our right to them, or in our manner of applying them. But more particularly these following Rules, not excluding others, deserve our consideration and regard.

1. Let us see to it, that our state be good. That is a good state, into which, not a merely outward, but a real inward Christianity, puts us; consisting in the conversion of the heart to the love of God, and of the life to the practice of every duty he commands us; faith in Jesus, as our Mediator and

and Advocate; an humble reliance on the merits of his Death, and an aſſiduous imitation of the virtues of his divine life. They alone, who are in ſuch a ſtate as this, have a right to the conſolations before offered; they alone can know them for their good. It is for them only, who have a reaſonable hope in their Death, not to be afraid of its approach. Well may Death appear terrible to others; very often ſuch do not ſo properly go, as are dragged out of this life, their ſouls are pulled away, not reſigned. And can we think this to be at all ſtrange, if they make any reflections whither they are going? Eternity cannot but ſtrike the Soul with trembling that ſtands on the edge of it, and ſees nothing but the pit of deſtruction, opening its mouth to receive him. Aſtoniſhment almoſt deprives him of the uſe of his reaſon, his heart meditates terror, and, in fearful expectation of judgment, he waits the ſtroke that will for ever ſever him from earth and heaven, from God and all good ſpirits, from bliſs and glory. But now, the man who is reconciled to God, and taken into the charge of the great Saviour of the world, and hath received the holy Spirit, as the ſeal of forgiveneſs, and the pledge of immortality, this man may juſtly be allowed to triumph over that, which cannot ſeparate him from *the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the love of God, and the communion of the*

holy Ghoſt; but, inſtead of that, puts him into the full injoyment of theſe. By the ſame method that prevents or removes his guilty fears, his natural fears of Death are overcome. The Chriſtian as ſuch hath nothing mortal about him, and is concerned with, and for nothing that is mortal. The ſpiritual life [l] is a flame kindled from heaven that will never be extinguiſhed. [m] *The word of God*, the inſtrument of his regeneration, *abideth forever*, and the almighty *efficient* of this great work is the *eternal Spirit*; the *covenant* on which he builds his hopes is the *everlaſting Goſpel*; *the Mediator of the covenant is made a Prieſt forever, after the power of an endleſs life, having obtained eternal redemption for us.* The God [n] in whom he truſts is the *unchangeable, everliving God*; and the things he aſpires to unſeen, but eternal. So that here is not the leaſt room for Death to put in its claim; it is all life, and peace, and joy, and all without end. Let us therefore put the *mortality* of the man, and the *immortality* of the Chriſtian, one over againſt the other. [o] *As for man, his days are as graſs: as a flower of the field ſo he flouriſheth, for the wind paſſeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof ſhall know it no more.* So far we have only the ruinous

[l] John v. 11. [m] 1 Pet. i. 23. Heb. ix. 14. Rev. xiv. 6. Heb. vii. 16. —— ix. 12. [n] Rev. iv. 9. 2 Cor. iv. 18. [o] Pſal. ciii. 15,—18.

nous face of things, where Death hath ſpread its conqueſts; read on, *but the mercy of the Lord is from everlaſting to everlaſting, upon them that fear him, and his righteouſneſs to children's children, to ſuch as keep his covenant, and remember his commandments to do them.* Only be in covenant with God, and keep his covenant, and you are upon a foundation which time and Death cannot deſtroy.

2. Let us labour after a greater diſengagement from the world, and the body. Is there a neceſſity of our leaving this world; and do we find it hard to bring our inclinations to agree with this neceſſity? Let us practiſe a more hearty indifference to the world, and what is now difficult, will, by degrees become eaſy. Were this world as worthleſs in our eſteem as it is in itſelf, and loved no more than it deſerves, the greateſt danger would then be, that we ſhould grow weary of our ſtay in it, and, with a kind of impatience, wiſh for the time of our diſmiſſion. We ſhould think the world but like one of thoſe narrow, rocky Iſlands, to which it was an ancient cuſtom among the *Romans* to baniſh criminals, (and to which, I cannot tell, whether I have not ſeen it ſome where or other, and on ſome occaſion or other, compared) glad to eſcape with the firſt fair opportunity. [p] *They that have*

[p] 1 Cor. vii. 29,—31.

wives, and children, and other dear relations, *would be, as though they had none*; *they that weep, as though they wept not*; *and they that rejoyce, as tho' they rejoyced not*; *and they that buy, as though they poſſeſſed not*; *and they that uſe this world, as not abuſing it*; *becauſe the faſhion of this world paſſeth away.* Muſt, in a little while more, this Soul of mine leave its Body, as well as I leave the world? Let me take care that my Soul be not too deeply immerſed in the life of the Body; and that it do not enter too far into its intereſts and ingagements; let me reſtrain the inclination to ſenſual delights, and by frequent denials tame, and mortify it. My Soul, thus practiſing an abſtaction from the Body, which is a kind of moral Death, will be the better prepared for the time when the Body falls under the ſtroke of the natural. A life of eaſe, and pleaſure, and fleſhly indulgences, is but a ſorry defence againſt the fears of Death; whereas, in the midſt of the greateſt abundance, and of carnal ſollicitations, a moderate and cautious uſe of theſe things would put us out of their power, and prevent their being a hindrance to us in our removal; inſomuch, that we ſhould be able to quit the world and the body, with the like freedom as thoſe that have nothing to loſe.

With the ſame view we ſhould keep our minds diſencumbered with the cares of life. If our hearts are overcharged with theſe, the

evil

evil day will come upon us unawares. We ſhould avoid, as much as we can, a multiplicity of worldly affairs; ſince the natural, and almoſt unavoidable, effect of theſe is a worldly temper; as the neceſſary effect of that will be a diſaffection to Death, which ſtops us in the midſt of our eager purſuits. I remember the *Hiſtorian* * tells us of an old officer under *Charles* V. who requeſting a diſcharge from his maſter, that he might ſpend the laſt years of his life in quiet and devotion; and, being aſked the reaſon of his intended retirement, replied, *inter vitæ negotia & mortis diem oportere ſpatium intercedere*, "that there ought to be ſome interval between the buſineſs of life, and "the day of one's Death:" which wiſe anſwer of his made ſo deep an impreſſion on the mind of that Emperor, as to confirm him in the deſign he had before formed of renouncing the world himſelf, and paſſing the remnant of his days in a religious ſolitude; as he afterwards did. This advice is, indeed, more eſpecially ſeaſonable for thoſe who are almoſt worn out with cares, and buſineſs; but however ſhould be ſo far minded by all, as to warn them never to be intangled, and, as it were, loſt in the affairs of the world; becauſe there is no man but is liable to Death, and therefore concerned to make all prudent proviſion for it.

3. Let

* *Strada de Bell. Belgic.*

3. Let us seek to have our minds thoroughly penetrated, and possessed, with the belief and hope of the heavenly world; and in order to make them the more powerful in their operation, let us entertain ourselves with frequent contemplations of its glorious objects. The afflictions of time would then seem to be light, and but for a moment, and Death rather to be wished for, than dreaded, [q] *while we looked not to the things which are seen, but to the things that are not seen*; comparing them together, both in respect of their weight and duration; a *light*, a *momentary* affliction, with an *exceeding, eternal weight of glory*. I could almost venture to recommend this, as next to an infallible method of procuring ease and tranquillity to the mind, under the apprehensions of our approaching dissolution. Why should I be so anxious about leaving this world, who believe a better, and hope for a better? [r] *Faith is the evidence of things not seen*; and, by making the future world present, would annihilate this. But then faith, to be effectual, must be inforced by serious, fixed and repeated consideration of the things we believe; which, otherwise, will be as if they were not. Where meditation is added to exercise and draw forth our faith, and to actuate our hopes, it loosens the chains which fastened our hearts to this world, and renders the

[q] 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. [r] Heb. xi. 1.

the thoughts of the laſt day we ſhall ſpend upon earth delightful. By drawing aſide the veil, and aſcending the mount of contemplation, we have communion with the Saints in light without dying; in which we are ſo delighted as to be willing to die, that this communion may be perfected; that we may join embraces with thoſe, with whom we have long been of one heart and one ſoul; and arrive to a ſort of equality in holineſs with them, whoſe examples we have weakly imitated, by endeavouring to do the will of God on earth, as they do in heaven. By ſuch meditations as theſe we learn to deſpiſe the world, which appears valuable, as the moſt worthleſs things may do, to thoſe only who are acquainted with nothing better; and ſpread our wings for a flight above the ſtars.

4. Let us make the thoughts of Death familiar to our minds; particularly in thoſe views of it which the Goſpel hath given us. How many things are there which we know not how to bear, till uſe and better acquaintance have reconciled us to them? As for inſtance, thoſe that have always lived in populous towns and cities, to exchange noiſe and hurry and company, for a ſtate of ſolitude and ſilence in the country? So Death, as a retirement from the world, and the grave, as a ſolitary, loneſome receſs, look more frigtful at a diſtance than near, and at

firſt ſight than after we have examined them more thoroughly; eſpecially in thoſe repreſentations, which are made of Death in the Goſpel of Chriſt; as a *releaſe* from an [f] *heavy burthen*, that ſinks us to the grave; the *happy concluſion* of a dangerous *war*, which, tho' honourable, allows of no truce, and is never finally decided but by Death; a *reſt from the labours* of this ſinful life; and ſeizing on the immortal prize, at the *finiſhing of our courſe*; with reſpect to the body, *a ſleep in Jeſus*; and, with regard to the ſoul, *an abſence from the body, that it may be preſent with the Lord.* How little reſemblance is there between this picture of Death, and that which is drawn by ſenſe, by guilt, and by a melancholy fancy? As often as we need to have the levity of our minds corrected, or inordinate affections repreſt, it may be of great uſe to ſet Death before us in its natural viſage, and with all its black and ſolemn train; but when the danger is not ſo great on this ſide, as of our being unfitted by the immoderate fears of Death for the comfortable diſcharge of the duties incumbent on us, it is then moſt adviſeable to view Death in another light, as transfigured by the pleaſing deſcriptions of it in the Word of God, and the commanding power of Faith, in the Chriſtian.

5. Let

[f] 2 Cor. v. 4, and 8. 2 Tim. iv. 7. Rev. xiv. 13. 1 Theſ. iv. 14.

5. Let us often reflect that our leaving the world is a thing under the direction of unerring wiſdom, and infinite love. For this thought would greatly contribute to facilitate our ſubmiſſion to the neceſſity of departing hence, when we looked on it, not as the effect of blind Fate, but the wiſe appointment of heaven, and reſult of a gracious, as well as ſovereign, decree. "Yes, I can "now ſubmit, not as of conſtraint, but wil- "lingly; with intire ſatisfaction, and com- "placency of ſoul; becauſe I know that as "there is [t] *a time to be born and a time to* "*die*, ſo chance hath nothing to do with "either. [u] *My times are in the hand of God*; "he hath the keys of the viſible and inviſible "worlds, exerciſes an uncontroulable domi- "nion over both, orders our appearance "on this earthly ſtage, with the parts we "are ſeverally to act, and then our diſap- "pearance and withdraw into another ſtate; "and does all things in the moſt proper ſea- "ſon. Henceforward, therefore, it ſhall "be the leaſt part of my ſollicitude that I "cannot live always in this world, and, it "may be, ſhall not live long. I am ſatis- "fied, I ſhall not go hence till I am called, "and, if prepared, cannot go too ſoon."

Laſtly. Let us keep ourſelves in a conſtant actual readineſs for our removal. An habitual preparation every true Chriſtian hath made;

[t] Eccleſ. iii. 2. [u] Pſal. xxxi. 15.

made, and can therefore die with ſafety; but a comfortable, a joyous, a triumphant Death requires ſomething more. And I cannot think, when our Saviour admoniſhes his diſciples to be alſo ready, [w] *becauſe they know not the day or the hour when the Son of man cometh*, that he means no more than their being in a ſtate of favour and forgiveneſs with God. I make no doubt but he comprehends that care which we ſhould all take to have our hearts united, and every grace of the divine Spirit awake, and in exerciſe; for thus only ſhall we *gird up the loins of our minds, as ſervants that expect the return of their Lord, and have our lamps trimed and burning*. An imoveable ſtedfaſtneſs in religion, a regular courſe of Goſpel obedience, (not patched like a garment in which there have been a thouſand rents, badly ſowed together again; but, like the coat of Chriſt, without ſeam from top to bottom) an equal, animated, and inlightened devotion, (not blazing for a moment, like fire in ſtraw, or burning bright and dim by fits, like a fire not well kindled) a wiſe circumſpection, and vigilence of behaviour; and finally, an abounding diligence in the work of the Lord; theſe, theſe are the things which muſt inſpire us with a confidence that Death with all its alarms cannot ſhake. A life of ſtrict religion will keep conſcience eaſy and on our ſide,

[w] Mat. xxiv. 44.

ſide, and conſcience is the beſt ſecond, as Chriſt is the beſt leader, in this laſt war; and if we add a ſpirit of devotion, which will always expreſs itſelf in the conſtant performance of devotional duties, we ſhall, as it were, live out of the world, while we are in it, and, by that means, be able with leſs difficulty to leave it once for all at Death. Chriſtians ſhould converſe as on the borders of eternity, and in the preſence of their Judge; ſhould maintain a fixed attention to their rule, and watch againſt any ſuch temper and poſture of mind, and way of life, as they would bluſh to have their Maſter find them in. And O were this their daily care, they would not dread the voice that ſummoned them out of this world, but chearfully obey it, readily break off in the midſt of their converſation with all things here below, and run to meet their Lord!

I ſhall Apply this ſubject in two Inferences, and a ſingle uſe of Exhortation.

1. Since the Fear of Death is a natural paſſion, I infer the divine excellency of the Chriſtian Religion, and ſingular privilege of thoſe that profeſs it. For the grand queſtion is, How we ſhall overcome our dread of Death, particularly under the notion of a final remove from the world, and the body; ſo as not, through fear of Death, to have our lives imbittered to us, and our ſouls in perpetual bondage? The offers and attempts

tempts of the *Poets* are not worth regarding, being at beſt but the ſlight excurſions and ſkirmiſhes of wit againſt an enemy, too powerful to be ſo combated and ſubdued. *Reaſon* can direct us to no effectual remedy againſt theſe fears. Wiſe men in all ages have tried at it, but without ſucceſs; leaving the glory of this conqueſt over the fears of Death to that great Perſon who overcame Death itſelf, and him that had the power of Death, that is, the Devil. Our Saviour by his preceps and example hath taught his followers the contempt of this life, and in his Goſpel hath revealed to them another. And the truth is, theſe two had need always go together; I mean, the command to deſpiſe all the blandiſhments and terrors of the world, with all the threats of Death, and the doctrine of a future happy ſtate.

I reckon him to have little right to injoin mortification and indifference to the preſent world, and leſs reaſon to think he ſhall be regarded, who hath no propoſals to make of a bleſſedneſs hereafter, that will eclipſe the glories, and overballance the riches and delights of time, ſo as to make us willing to throw them up all; and this gives us the reaſon of the defeat which the wiſdom of men hath generally met with in its indeavours to raiſe the human Soul above its natural hopes and fears: but now our divine

vine Maſter, when he calls us to forſake all that we have, either actually when Providence ſupplies us with a juſt occaſion, or in the reſolution and affection of our minds, and to hate our lives for his ſake, may well expect to have his commands joyfully complied with, becauſe he aſſures us of treaſure in heaven, and that we ſhall find that life again to advantage, which we loſe in his cauſe, or while we are in his ſervice, and doing his buſineſs. He hath *brought life and immortality to light by his Goſpel*, and diſcovered and promiſed ſufficient to wean every one who believes in him from the love of life; which will naturally be followed with a mind fearleſs of Death. And, by the way, this hints a conſiderable difference between the Saints under the *Old* Teſtament, and thoſe under the *New*, wherein the latter have manifeſtly the advantage. *David* when he prayed, *O ſpare me &c.* and *Hezekiah* in the text, betrayed a ſtrange diſcompoſure of mind under the apprehenſions of Death; while *Stephen* amidſt a ſhower of ſtones calmly breathed forth his ſpirit into the hands of his Redeemer: *Peter*, the night before his intended execution, ſlept ſo ſoundly betwixt his keepers, as not to awake, though ſurrounded with a miraculous light, till the Angel ſmote him on the ſide, ſaying to him, *ariſe up quickly*; and the *Apoſtle Paul* expreſſes a vehement deſire to *depart*, and *to be*

with Christ, as *far better* than continuing in the body. That there was something extraordinary in these instances I freely grant; but from the reason which *St. Paul* subjoins of his desire to be desolved, *viz. that he might be with Christ*, and the vision which the protomartyr *Stephen* had of Jesus *standing on the right hand of God*, as it were in the act to receive him, I cannot but observe, that the glorious prospects which the first Christians had into the next life, under the powerful assistances of the divine Spirit, (which we may have in proportion to the exigency of our case, as well as they) made them equally despise all that the world could do for them, or against them, and put off the Body with as much alacrity, as a man does a garment that tires and incommodes him.

2. I would from hence take occasion to mind both you and myself of the necessity, and wisdom, of a christian life. It is necessary that we may be rationally willing to die; and it is therefore wise. A religious life naturally begets peace and confidence, fortifies the mind against abject fears, purges it of low and mean desires, gives it noble views, and generous aims and hopes, and by lessening the relish and esteem of the world, diminishes the reluctance we feel in quiting it: but then its greatest usefulness is seen in entitling us to the supports, and the rewards

wards of the Goſpel. Whoever leads a life conformable to the precepts of Chriſtianity, may take the comfort of all that God hath promiſed, be ſatisfied of the forgiveneſs of all his ſins, lay hold of the righteouſneſs of his Saviour, and depend on the powerful aids and conſolations of the holy Spirit, and boldly, though humbly, claim an immortal crown. And the perſon that can do all this need not, when the time for his departure is come, out of a fooliſh fondneſs for this worthleſs, ſinful, tranſitory, life, weep ſore that he muſt die, and not live. To conclude.

Let us be perſuaded to examine what is the ſtate of our ſouls with reſpect to the fear of Death; and reſolve we will do every thing neceſſary to ſettle the repoſe of our minds on a right foundation. Have we conquered our fear of Death upon ſuch principles, and by ſuch methods, as thoſe before adviſed to, ſo that we can think of Death, and be even refreſhed and ſupported by the thought; or, at leaſt, not extremely ruffled and unhinged by it? Or have we only diverted this fear by the methods of worldly and ſenſual prudence? If this be the caſe, we ſhall ſtudiouſly ſhun the thoughts of Death, we ſhall be glad of any expedient that will help to put them aſide. But now, not to obſerve, that theſe thoughts will return upon us, whether we will or no, in ſome circumſtaces,

and turn our laughter into mourning, and our joy into heavineſs; not to inſiſt on this, I would only argue from the care we take to get out of the way of ſuch thoughts, that there is at the bottom of our ſouls a fear of Death, which, firſt or laſt, will ſurprize us like a whirlwind, that we ſhall not be able to reſiſt.

Wherefore that I may know how it is with me in this important point, as I ſhould take a review of my life, and conſider what that hath been, ſo is it proper likewiſe, that I ſhould converſe a little with the idea of Death, and obſerve what emotions it raiſes in me. Let me imagine I received the ſame meſſage as *Hananiah*, [x] *This year thou ſhalt die*, would it not ſtartle me? Should I think, I had any time to ſpare for ſinful gratifications, trifling amuſements, and indulgence to ſloth and inactivity? Or ſhould I even have the leaſt temptation to them? Let me further put the caſe, the meſſage ran as that to *Hezekiah*, *Set thine houſe in order, for thou ſhalt die, and not live*; as I ſhould reckon I had but a ſhort time ſtinted me by theſe words, ſhould I not be more alarmed, than on the former ſuppoſition, and be in ſo much hurry to diſpatch my ſecular and ſpiritual affairs, to ſet my houſe and my ſoul in order, as to do neither of them well? Should I not, as he did, *weep ſore*; or be too

[x] Jeri. xxviii. 15.

too much surprized and astonished to weep at all? That I may reduce the thought within yet narrower bounds, let me conceive, that one sent from the dead greeted me in words like those of the apparition to *Saul*, [y] *To morrow shalt thou be with me*, joined to the congregation of the dead, thy Body a lifeless carcass, thy Soul a thin unbodied ghost; should I have more courage than he had, who, though a warrior, and familiar with the visage of Death in the field, yet *fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid?*

Yet, once more, let me imagine I heard a voice saying to me as to the rich man, [z] *This night shall thy soul be required of thee.* Let the voice be never so soft and gentle, that conveyed this awful message, O who can describe the consternation that would seize my soul; the agonies, and convulsions, worse by far than the bodily pangs of Death, which I should feel, if no better prepared for Death than this worldling, and apprehensive that I was not? How would my heart at once be cleared of all the impertinent and guilty thoughts, all the distracting busy cares, all the irregular desires and complacencies, that filled it the moment before? O why, though I have no such divine warning, why should I not be persuaded to think on Death, when its approach is certain, and may be

[y] 1 Sam. xxviii. 19, 20. [z] Luke xii. 20.

ſudden? And to dwell on theſe thoughts till they had their proper effect upon me, to make me more diligent and exact in preparing for my latter end? Then ſhould I have no reaſon to fear the thoughts of Death; or Death itſelf though I ſaw its hand lifted up to ſtrike me to the heart. Then might I regard Death as one of the moſt delightful, as well as inſtructive, ſubjects I could think on; and, having made Jeſus my friend, and ſet him continually before me in the courſe of my life, leave the world, not only fearleſs, but full of peace, and joy unſpeakable.

An Inquiry in what Senſe, and upon what Grounds, Perſons, who naturally dread Death, may yet deſire not to live always.

Being a

Funeral Sermon

Occaſioned by the

D E A T H

OF

Mrs. *Prudence Welman*,

IN THE

LXXIV. Year of her Age.

1729.

TO

Thomas Welman, *Esq*;

SIR,

YOUR desire alone, without any other reason, would have been more than enough to determine me to the publishing the following Discourse; the Author being too sensible of his obligations to you for your many Favours, and in a special manner, for your Friendship, which comprizes all the rest, and gives them their greatest value, to be able to refuse so small a testimony of his readiness to serve you. But several things, besides this, have concured; among which, the filial affection that gave rise to your request, and the sincere esteem and regard, which, together with yourself, and many others, I bear to the memory of the Deceased, were not the least considerable.

To

To these let me add, as what, I confess, had some weight with me, the near affinity betwixt the subject of this, and of a former Sermon; answering, in some sort, to the relation between the Persons whose Deaths occasioned the one, and the other; that was on the Fear of Death, as a natural passion, *the* grounds *of it, and the* remedies *against it; this treats of the Desire of Death, as either* faulty, innocent, *or* commendable, *according to the different principles and causes which it flows from; that was preached for an agreeable and beloved* Niece; *this for a pious, and much respected* Parent.

In an age wherein serious Religion is so generally out of fashion, especially among those of plentiful fortunes, it is with a great deal of pleasure I see this Stranger *taken in, and respectfully entertained by two kindred families, whose highest interest I am not more strongly bound to seek, by the Ministerial relation which the Providence of God hath placed me in to them, than I am heartily disposed to rejoyce in it, and in their welfare and prosperity of every kind.*

May it always be a part of your character, that you know how to injoy *the word, without being insnared by the temptations of it; and to* use *it so as to have the noblest satisfaction*

faction it can be the occasion of, which is that of doing good; and being able to regard the best things in it as earnests, indeed, in company with the Grace of God, but yet as very poor and disproportioned ones, of heavenly and eternal blessings.

I am

SIR,

With the greatest Sincerity,

Your most Obliged

Humble Servant,

HENRY GROVE.

SERMON VIII.

On what Grounds we may desire not to live always.

JOB vii. 16.

I would not live always.

THERE is reason to conclude from the essential goodness of the divine Nature, that all those numerous evils which infest this mortal life, had their original intirely from man himself. That man would not have known sin, if he had not made an ill use of his liberty, is most certain; as it is further highly probable that pain, and sorrow, and Death, would never have come into the world, if sin had not entered first, and thereby made a wide breach for them to follow; the begining of evil, both moral and penal, being as when one leteth out water, its first eruption might have easily been prevented, but after that it spreads like a deluge.

And

And yet we muſt not argue, that becauſe ſin is the effect of man's free choice, and ſuffering the effect of ſin, they that ſuffer moſt are therefore the greateſt ſinners. This would be both a raſh and a falſe judgment, ſince we read in *Scripture* of two that were emphatically *Men of ſorrow, and acquainted with grief*; one of them ſtyled by him that knoweth the hearts of all, [a] *A perfect and an upright man, one that feared God, and eſchewed evil*; the other [b] *Tempted in all points, like as we are, yet without ſin*; the former choſen out for an example of ſuffering affliction to all generations; the other ſet forth not only as the moſt complete model of virtue and holineſs that ever was, but an all-ſufficient Sacrifice for ſin.

[c] *Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have ſeen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.* If his trials had not been uncommon, his patience would not have been ſo remarkable, nor his end ſo happy and honourable; his was not like the affected patience of the *Stoicks*, a ſullen pride, and ſtubborneſs of ſoul, but the humble reſignation of a ſaint and child of God; [d] *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; bleſſed be the name of the Lord.* As one that had a tender feeling of every ſtroke, he pours out his complaints in all the

[a] Job i. 1. [b] Heb. iv. 15.
[c] James v. 11. [d] Job i. 21.

the eloquence of woe. But then, the character of no mere man being absolutely perfect, he sometimes carries his complaints too far; there is too much of the infirmities of the man in them. So, I doubt, there is in some of the expressions made use of in this Chapter; as particularly where he says, *I will not refrain my mouth, I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou setest a watch over me? When I say, my bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint, then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me with visions; so that my soul chooseth strangling and death rather than life; I loath it,* it is my greatest aversion, *I would not live always,* or, I am not to live always; but must shortly die; and I would die presently, *let me alone, for my days are vanity,* take the breath which thou hast given; [e] *Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit; and what is man that thou shouldest magnify him, that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?* Let me beseech thee to put a speedy end to my days, since they [f] *flee away and see no good.* This is not like the Saviour of the world, when, in a much greater agony, he prayed, saying, [g] *O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.* What was wanting in the first

[e] Job x. 12. [f] Job ix. 25. [g] Mat. xxvi. 39.

firſt of theſe patterns, let us ſupply from the latter; and while we praiſe and imitate whatever we ſee commendable in every ſincerely pious and good perſon, and make all favourable allowances for the failings of ſuch, out of regard to their ſuperior virtues, and *conſidering ourſelves leſt we alſo be tempted*, let us *implicitly*, and *wholly* follow none but the Son of God.

When afflicted *Job* ſaith, *I would not live always*, he is not to be underſtood *abſolutely*, as renouncing all hope of immortality, and deſireous to return to the ſame ſtate he was in before he was born. As he was a man, a Being in whom an ardent thirſt of happineſs is found, with an idea or notion of a duration without end, he could not but join theſe two together, and wiſh, at leaſt, to be for ever happy. It could not be an indifferent thing to him *to be*, or *not to be*, much leſs could he look upon the latter of theſe, as in itſelf rather to be choſen than the former. And if as a man, certainly then as a good man much more, he muſt breathe after life and immortality. He could not love God with any fervency of affection, and, at the ſame time, think with pleaſure of paſſing into a ſtate, in which he ſhould love him no more, and never more have any knowledge and injoyment of him. Let us ſuppoſe him willing to reſign his Being, *abſtractly taken*, yet ſurely he could not be con-

contented to part with what was dearer to him than life itself, *the capacity to love and converse with God*; and consequently he could not be easy to give up his Being, which was the foundation of all intercourse with the supreme object of his felicity.

It is true, from his description of Death and the grave in several places of this book, and, particularly, in the third Chapter, one would imagine that he longed to be swallowed up in utter silence and forgetfulness; *Why died I not from the womb? Then should I have lien still, and been quiet; I should have slept, and been at rest. As an hidden untimely birth I had never been; as infants who never saw the light; there the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest.* But, in all this, he only indulges a melancholy imagination, which, representing the grave to him as a place of refuge, where none of the bitter storms of life could reach him, made him talk as if he had for a time forgoten there was another state beyond Death. The repose which his Body, quite tired with its burthen, would find in the dust appeared so desireable to him, that he speaks nothing of any other rest that he expected: from whence if we should presently conclude that he believed and expected none, we should reason very wrong; it being impossible that one who had such just apprehensions of God and religion, and was no

ſtranger to particular revelations from him, could be ignorant of a life to come; or think rhe reſt of the grave comparable to the reſt of the Soul in the boſom of divine love; or that he could give up his Body itſelf to corruption, without all proſpect of a time, however diſtant, when it ſhould be redeemed from the diſhonours of the grave, and neither ſuffer or die any more. Accordingly, beſides many hints of a future Reſurrection to be met with in the Book of *Job*, there is one paſſage ſo full to this purpoſe, with regard to the words, that a Chriſtian could not expreſs his ſentiments and hopes in more lively and ſignificant language; *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth: and though, after my ſkin, worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God; whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf, and my eyes ſhall behold, and not another, though my reins be conſumed within me.* And why ſhould we reſtrain theſe words, which are ſo exceeding proper to expreſs the doctrine of the Reſurrection, that better could not have been choſen, to ſignify the hope which *Job* had of ſeeing an end of his troubles in this life; an event which, if foreſeen by him, falls ſo much ſhort of the propriety, ſtrength and loftineſs of the expreſſions? Eſpecially, when we further conſider, with what ſolemnity they are introduced;

Oh

[h] *Oh that my words were now writen! Oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven, with an iron pen and lead, in the rock forever!* And I do not know why it should not have some weight with us, at least to shew the sense of the ancient *Jews* in this matter, that in the *Septuagint* Translation of the Book of *Job*, after these words, *So Job died, being old, and full of days*, it is added, *but it is writen, he shall rise again with them whom the Lord doth raise*; for to what is this so likely to refer as to the faith of *Job* delivered in the passage before cited? We must, therefore, fix on this as his true and whole meaning in the words of the text, "That he would not *live always in the* "*present world*; in the circumstances he "was now in, he had enough of it, and "was ready to leave it as soon as God "should please; the sooner, in his opinion, "the better; the time seemed long and "tedious, while he was waiting for his dis-"mission; so earnestly did he desire to be "gone."

But then in speaking thus, *Job* doth not express the sense of all, neither, perhaps, not of the much greater part of mankind. There are those who, if the matter was left to their choice, would be for spending their immortality upon earth. Of this number are all sensual ungodly sinners, who have

[h] Job. xix. 23,—27.

the means of gratifying their appetites to the full, and withhold not from them any joy. Theſe men are apt to fancy, that could they make their worldly proſperity eternal, they ſhould be eternally happy; and have nothing further to wiſh for, being perfectly eaſy and well ſatisfied in the circumſtances of their Being; though, herein, they are undoubtedly miſtaken. For, alas, the ground of all that pleaſure and amuſement which carnal minds have in theſe things, is their novelty; ſo that, in leangth of time, and much more in eternity, theſe vanities would loſe all their imaginary charms, and appear to be what they are, of little or no real value. I may appeal to thoſe who are the greateſt admirers of *riches*, or *honour*, or *ſenſual pleaſure*, whether they have ſo great an opinion of theſe things after they have injoyed them for ſome time, as they had at firſt; whether the delight they afford them doth not continually leſſen, (however their dotage, from the influence of cuſtom, may increaſe) and would not therefore, as is probable, intirely vaniſh away, were they only to injoy them for ſome thouſands of years; and even turn into a loathing and diſguſt of their reaſon, for them, if there was to be no end, and no change of their injoyments; and whenever this happened, that theſe falſe goods had loſt all their amiableneſs in the eyes of thoſe who had moſt partially eſteemed, and eagerly purſued

purſued them, they would then be ſenſible of their want of ſome other more real and ſubſtantial good, which they had neglected when it was attainable by them, and of their folly in neglecting, and miſery in wanting it; and ſo would pine away in fruitleſs remorſe, and endleſs deſpair. However ſtill, thus much is evidently true, that as long as their notions, and inclinations, as flowing from their notions, continued the ſame, they would prefer living always after the manner they do, ſenſeleſs and brutiſh as it is, before wholly ceaſing to be, or removing into another world, where no entertainments were to be had like thoſe of the preſent life. And whereas many of the ungodly do not proſper in the world, but lead a wreched as well as a ſinful life, (which, by the way, aggravates the guilt of perſiſting in a courſe which hath ſo little temptation attending it) yet even theſe, till they are driven by the extremity of anguiſh and diſtreſs, chuſe *to live here always*, in hope of ſeeing better days, rather than to exchange their preſent lot for one more miſerable, and hopeleſs too.

But though every one is not of *Job*'s mind, when he ſays, *I would not live always*, that is, *in this world*, yet a great many are; and upon one account, and from one principle, or other, can uſe the ſame words. And that I may comprehend all who join in this language, how much ſoever they may

differ in the temper of mind with which they utter it, I ſhall conſider it in theſe following views, *viz.* as the language of *Diſcontent*—the language of *Nature*—the language of *Reaſon*—and finally, as the language of *Grace*.

I. This is, too often, the language of *Diſcontent*, of which there are two kinds, and of different degrees of guilt.

The firſt, and generally the leaſt excuſable, is, when men have no good reaſon to be weary of life; and would not be ſo, if they were not under the influence of ſome intemperate and ungoverned paſſion, which makes them fall out with their Being, and in haſte to be rid of it. It may be queſtioned, whether *Elijah* was altogether guiltleſs in this matter, who when he was obliged to flee into the wilderneſs, in order to hide himſelf from the rage of *Jezebel*, after having wandered diſconſolate and ſolitary, ſat himſelf down under a tree, and requeſted that he might die, ſaying, [i] *It is enough now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers*; and why therefore ſhould my life be drawn out to ſuch a length, when they have fallen ſacrifices to the malice of bloody perſecutors? In this inſtance, though there ſeems to be a mixture of diſcontent

[i] 1 Kings xix. 4.

content, yet that is so much less perceivable than the Prophet's timorousness, and dejection of spirit, that a very small degree of charity will serve to cover this failing of his.

The next instance, which is that of *Jeremiah*, will not, I fear, admit of so easy an apology; his passion, occasioned by the contempt and ill usage he met with, prevailing so far over his reason as to carry him not only [k] *to curse the day in which he was born, but even the person who brought the first tidings of his birth to his father.* But the most remarkable example of all, and most unaccountable in respect of the little occasion that was given for his uneasiness, was *Jonah*, who was so exceedingly displeased at God's having sent him to threaten the people of *Nineveh* with speedy destruction, and then stoping the execution upon their repentance, that he puts up this strange prayer, *Therefore now, O Lord, take I beseech thee, my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live*; not that it was so now more than at any other time; but what led him to judge so was his being too tender of his own reputation, which he was afraid would suffer by the seeming disagreement between the prophecy and the event. And just after this, when he began to return to a right temper, he did not long keep in it; but, upon the withering of the gourd, under the sha-

[k] Jer. xx. 7. and 14,—18.

dow of which he had ſet with much delight, and being expoſed, without defence to the burning winds, and the fervent rays of the ſun which beat upon him, [l] *He fainted, and wiſhed within himſelf to die, and ſaid*, as before, *it is better for me to die than to live*; as, perhaps, it would have been, if he had been doomed to live always in that unſheltered condition; but when, by only changing place, he could have avoided the inconvenience complained of, his Prayer was not the effect of his Devotion, and Submiſſion to God, but of his Peeviſhneſs. Theſe examples were not deſigned to encourage us in a like temper, but to ſhew us the weakneſs of human nature, and that the beſt of men, and thoſe who by the ſacredneſs of their character are moſt raiſed above others, are yet [m] *ſubject to like paſſions* with them.

We ſhould have more cauſe to be ſurprized at this behaviour of the perſons now mentioned, if we had not ſo many inſtances before us, that too nearly reſemble it, eſpecially among thoſe of a fretful and uneaſy diſpoſition. How common is it for ſome, as often as they meet with any little diſappointment in life, are croſt by their fellow-creatures, or by the Providence of God, or have not every thing juſt to their wiſh, preſently to loſe the poſſeſſion of their ſouls; and ſometimes to be tranſported ſo far as to cry out, *I am weary*

[l] Jonah iv. 8. [m] James v. 17.

weary of my life; if I must be perpetually vexed and disturbed thus, what good will my life do me? And were they asked, as *Jonah*, *Dost thou well to be angry?* They would be ready to answer as he, *I do well to be angry even unto Death*; so displeased with life, as to think Death the greater blessing. And yet after all they may thank their own foolish and impotent passions for this vexation of spirit; *they disquiet themselves in vain*, are their own tormentors, and do not really know what they would have; for, as much as they may seem to court Death, was Death to come at their request, like the man in the fable, they would most of them presently reverse their petition. We may justly call this *a spirit of Discontent*, to which every one should be cautioned not to give way, least at length, through the righteous judgment of God, it should gain so much the ascendant over them as to make them wish for Death in earnest, after having so long trifled with it; if not to do that in the rage of passion which nothing but the absence of Reason can excuse, and no after-repentance can remedy.

When the condition of a person is such that, upon a sober view of things, Death appears preferable to life, which is the other case, yet discontent may have too great a share in his prayers and supplications to God for a discharge. And whether this be so as

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to himſelf in particular, any one that is willing may eaſily know.

Do my ſufferings breed impatience, ſo that I do not reflect as I ought to do on the wiſe ends which God hath in prolonging my trial, and appointing it to be ſo ſevere; nor take the care I ſhould to anſwer theſe ends; nor ſubmit to the divine will with the intire acquieſcence of my own? This ſhews, however ſure I am of my own integrity, and that a merciful God will not impute ſuch my infirmities to me, that I ought to blame myſelf for them; and may convince the moſt eminent chriſtians of the need they have to be watchful over their own ſpirits, when the hand of God lies heavy upon them, and to pray with ſtill more earneſtneſs *that patience may have its perfect work*, and not fail them till life itſelf doth. If the *Scripture* ſpeaks only of the *patience* of *Job*, it was not becauſe he was never guilty of the leaſt *impatience*; particularly in hating his life. Doth *Job curſe his day?* Aſk, *wherefore is light given to him that is in miſery*, and *life to the bitter in ſoul? And beg of God to let looſe his hand, and cut him off?* And is there no mixture of *impatience* in all this? It is but too evident there was; and ſo likewiſe in his complaint in the text, and the verſes preceding and following; but all this is paſſed by, to ſhew that the Lord is gracious, and merciful, that *he knoweth*

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our frame, and remembereth that we are dust, and delighteth to incourage and reward the sincere, though imperfect, virtue of them that love him, and keep his commandments.

II. We may conclude this as the language of *Nature*, for so it is sometimes, though not very often, [n] *I would not live always. Is my strength the strength of stones? Or is my flesh of brass?* Far otherwise. *Human Nature* is a poor, infirm thing, and, like a flower of the field, to which it is compared in scripture, bends beneath the showers, and is quite broked with the storms of Adversity. The account given of mortal men is, that [o] *They dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth.* Now when *the life* of man *is spent with grief, and his years with sighing, when his strength faileth because of his iniquity, and his bones are consumed*, and the only door of hope left is that which opens out of this life, that is, the gate of Death, it is not strange if he waits to see the door opened, that he may fairly make his escape. The tired *traveller* that can go no further may be allowed to lie down, and rest; the *mariner*, to whom the deaf and furious tempest hath left nothing but a narrow plank, to look towards the shore. And may not nature claim the privilege of humbly desireing

[n] Job vi. 10. [o] Job iv. 19.

ſireing, and petitioning for a releaſe, though it muſt not do any thing to haſten it, when it is oppreſſed with a load of ſorrow and affliction, under which it ſinks to the grave? Perhaps a thought may here ariſe, is not Death terrible to nature? And can it be natural to *fear* Death, and to *deſire* it too? In different reſpects it may. It is not more natural to dread the period of our Beings, than to deſire the period of our woes; and, conſequently, when it is apprehended that Death only can end them, and that, as ending our complaints it will prove a greater good, than it can be accounted an evil as it terminates our exiſtence, nature itſelf will lay down its neck, to receive the fatal blow. But then, that we might not be tempted to anticipate the appointed time, it is wiſely provided by the Author of nature, that for the greater part, as long as there is *life* there ſhould be *hope*, not barely of a longer, but of a happier, at leaſt eaſier, life; by which means, the fear of Death exerts itſelf with greater power, having nothing to counterbalance it, and is the cauſe that men love that life, and endeavour to preſerve it, which they are willing to believe and hope will not always be ſo afflicted and troubleſome, as it is at preſent. This, indeed, can hardly be expected by thoſe who ſtoop under the weight of years; which, one would think, ſhould make it *natural* for all *old people* to be more

more than contented to die; for, as an ancient Moralist * observes, what can happen out that is more according to nature than the Death of such? And again, Nature, saith he, hath a fixed measure, as in all other things, so in living; and yet, we see it is otherwise: Nature staggers under its burthen, but is seldom willing to lay it down, unless some other calamities, besides those which are the usual attendants of *old age*, be added to break off the ingagements with life; they are *full of days*, in the language of *scripture*, yet not *satisfied with long life*, nor disposed to rise from table, like grateful guests, when they have eaten as long as they had an appetite left. † But if Nature in this case doth not know that Death is in season, Reason does. Of which I shall have occasion to speak under the next particular.

III. These words, *I would not live always in this world*, are the voice of *Reason*. The desire of a more than ordinary length of days upon earth, for its own sake, cannot flow from Reason; much less the desire of an immortal life in such an imperfect state as this is. ᵖ *Man, in his best estate, is altogether vanity.* It is but an empty shew, when finest, that he converses with, and a narrow circle to which he is confined. And is

* *Cicero de Sen.* † *Seneca.* ᵖ Psal. xxxix. 5.

is he ſo in love with *Vanity* that he would have it perpetuated? Would he continue to be a ſpectator of the ſame idle and diſtracted ſcene; and forever tread the ſame dull round? If we conſider this life apart from the relation it ſtands in to another, what is there in it that will bear the teſt of repeated experiments, and of a long, not to ſay an everlaſting, acquaintance? What is there of which a wiſe and thinking man would not quickly diſcern the worthleſneſs and inſignificancy, ſo as to be full of it in a few years converſation, and heartily ſick, if not aſhamed of it, in a few ages? To eat, and drink, and ſleep; to go out, and come in; riſe up to labour, and lie down to reſt; to receive, and pay, unprofitable viſits, too often worſe; to be full and grow hungery; to have the returns of the ſame low appetites, and mean pleaſures in the gratification of them; to laugh, and weep, and both from the ſame trifling cauſes; to be ever in motion towards happineſs and ſatisfaction, and never to arrive at it, hardly, to approach any thing nearer; to live in ignorance, which is next to not living at all; or with a great deal of pains to get juſt knowledge enough to ſee our want of it, and to give us a quicker ſenſe of the vanity, and miſery of life; what is there ſo deſireable in all this, that Reaſon ſhould be captivated by it, and not judge the time alloted for ſuch a ſtate of

of things sure long enough? Hear how a *Heathen* * talks upon this subject; " All " things in all times have been alike, and " proceeded in a round; and therefore it " makes little difference whether a man sees " the same things for a hundred, or two " hundred, years, or an interminable time. ----§ " As thou findest thyself affected at " the diversions of the Theatre, and such " like places, where the same things being " constantly and uniformly represented cause " satiety in the spectators, after the same " manner shouldest thou be affected in life. " For turn things which way youwill, up or " down, on this side, or that, they are the " same things still, and spring from the same " causes. When, therefore, wilt thou say, " *it is enough?*" He was an *Emperor* who made these reflections; a *Roman Emperor*, who had legions at his command, and every thing else but content and happiness: and a greater than he for wisdom, as well as upon a level with him in respect of *royalty*, fixes the change of vanity upon human things, for the like reason; ¶ *The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun.* They who say such things must have been of the same mind with him **, who protested, " that if it " was

* *Anto. Lib.* 2. *S.* 4. § *Lib.* 6. *S.* 46.
¶ Eccles. i. 9. ** *Cicero de Sen.*

" was offered him to return back to infan-
" cy, and live over the ſame days again, he
" would earneſtly refuſe it;" as I believe a great many others would, if they were not to correct their former follies and faults, but to repeat them over again.

And if the beſt eſtate of man, as we have ſeen, is vanity, when the members of his *body*, and the faculties of his *mind*, his *ſenſes*, his *imagination*, his *memory*, his *reaſon*, are in the greateſt vigour and perfection, what is his worſt eſtate, when he is fallen, or falling into decay? What pleaſure there is in life moſtly depends upon the ſtrength and vivacity of the faculties, and their being in right order for converſing with, and injoying their proper objects; and it muſt be owned, when this is the caſe, that the delights of a reaſonable mind imployed in the contemplation of God and his works, in offices of kindneſs, and good will to men, and in the exerciſes of virtue and piety, are of no little value: but *age*, which brings on a melancholy change in the mind, as well as the body, clouding its brightneſs, and impairing its force and activity, muſt of conſequence in a great meaſure incapacitate us for theſe which are the moſt valuable, that I may not ſay, the only valuable pleaſures in human life. And can it be the voice of *Reaſon* that a man ſhould be exceeding deſireous

sireous of living till he is become like a ruinous house, and the candle which inlightened the innermost parts of it, is sunk into its socket, and burns as if it was just expiring? After the glory of a man, his Understanding, is departed; or only the poor remains survive, the man, now hardly such, may hug life faster than ever; but that is only thro' instinct, or the force of habit and custom, and because he hath not *Reason* enough left to advise him better.

Nay, was this decay in our faculties never to happen, yet forasmuch as it is reasonable to believe, that in another world we shall have greater advantages for the improvement of our minds, and the successful pursuit of *truth*, *virtue*, and *felicity*, they that listened to *Reason*, would choose to be transplanted into that world, that they might make the trial, rather than always continue in the non-age of their Beings. Now this advantage of the next life above this in point of perfection, which *Reason* makes probable, is by the testimony of *divine revelation* become indisputably certain. Which brings me, in the last place,

IV. To consider these words as the language of *Grace*. *I would not live here always*, may every good christian truly say, and cannot but say, if he knows himself for what he is, a child of God, and an heir of

the heavenly glory. Of this we have an eminent example in the Apoſtle *Paul*, who having faithfully ſerved his beloved Maſter, had [r] *a deſire to depart, and to be with him*, being well ſatisfied that he ſhould be accepted of him, and received into his joy, which was *far better* in reſpect of his own private intereſt and happineſs, than to ſtay in the body. *Grace* is an *immortal principle*, an *incorruptable ſeed*, the *life of God in the ſoul*, which can never be extinguiſhed; but inſtead of that gets ſtrength with time, and ſpreads and flouriſhes to eternity; and being the *offspring of God*, and derived from heaven, it muſt be ſtill mounting upward, and indeavouring to unite with its ſource and center. Chriſtians are [s] *born from above*, and therefore [t] *ſet their affections on things above, and not on things on the earth, being themſelves dead, and their life hid with Chriſt in God.* It muſt be confeſſed indeed, that ſouls the beſt prepared for heaven, may, through the infirmity of the fleſh, or the weakneſs of their faith and hope, or a tender concern for ſome whom they muſt leave behind them in the world, be willing to live a little longer; but, in caſe they had a proſpect of continuing in the world not a few *years*, but for many *ages* to come, they would be quite diſheartened thereby; and whatever backwardneſs they may now diſcover to part,

[r] Phil. i. 23. [s] John iii. 3. [t] Col. iii. 2, 3.

part, when the moment for it is come, they would, did they know beforehand their salvation to be so far off, have no life or spirit left them; they would not be able to think with any patience of so tedious an absence from their Lord and Saviour, of draging about with them a body of sin and death so long, and continuing so long in a state of imperfect knowledge, and more imperfect grace and holiness; and much more, if they were told by a messenger from heaven, that they must depart out of life this hour, or forever after be chained down to it, they would not be in the least strait what to choose, but instantly put themselves into a readiness chearfully to follow their heavenly Guide. The particular grounds of this preference of a *heavenly* to an *earthly* immortality, (some of which I have just now hinted at) are these following.

1. There is in every Being a principle which makes it tend to its proper perfection; and in the same proportion as this principle is more active, and the perfection of the Being of a nobler kind, the stronger is that tendency. Now *Glory* is the perfection of *Grace*; and as nothing can be so active as *Grace*, or so excellent as *Glory*, *Grace*, with incessant indeavours, will be reaching after *Glory*. Here every thing in the *new creature* is imperfect, his knowledge and love of

God, and his likeneſs to him. In that world, to which he is going, he ſhall *know as alſo he is known*, and love to the utmoſt ſtretch of his capacity; he ſhall be [u] *ſatisfied when he awakes with the* perfect *likeneſs* of the eternal God, the great original of beauty and excellence; and when the Son of God [w] *ſhall appear, he ſhall be like him, becauſe he ſhall ſee him as he is.* Here he is ever offending the God whom he loves, there he ſhall love him too well to offend him any more. [x] Here ſin *dwells*, though it doth not *reign*, *in his mortal body*, there having put off his body, he ſhall find himſelf free from all his inclinations to ſin, and never more complain that he *does what he hates.* Here if he doth not ſin, yet he is tempted to it, which *vexes his righteous ſoul from day to day*, and breaks the peace and tranquility of his life, there he ſhall be as free from temptation as he is from ſin; having no tempter in his own boſom, and that *wicked one* who is called *the Tempter*, being baniſhed from thoſe bliſsful regions, never to be admited there more. O the inconceivable difference between the future ſtate of the ſaints and the preſent! Now their minds are weak and narrow, covered with thick darkneſs, and labouring under manifold prejudices; then they ſhall be brightened and clarified, no ſpot left remaining

[u] Pſal. xvii. 15. [w] 1 John iii. 2.
[x] Rom. vi. 12.

ing upon the eye, no imperfection of any kind in the sight. Now the Will in the very best of men is corrupted, they do not *follow God fully*, (taking those words in the strictest sense) their hearts are divided, and though God hath the greater part, and in the charitable language of scripture, *the whole*, yet it must be confessed with grief that their affections are too much at the command of other things; in heaven this contest for the heart of man, between the Creator and the creature shall be at an end; God shall have all he challenges, the heart shall own his right, rest upon him, cleave to him, delight in him. *Whom have I in heaven but thee?* Is the language of the holy soul in heaven. Here is every thing to please, all is lovely and delightful; but it is thy presence, O Lord, that makes it to be so; their brightness is but a shadow of thine, their beauty a reflection of thine, their goodness a drop of thine! My heart desired none but thee upon earth, and now I have what I so long desired. I have found him whom my soul loves, with whose perfections myriads of blessed Spirits are enamoured; we have found him, and we will never let him go—But this belongs more properly to the next particular, to which I shall proceed, after having observed that the reason why I have not mentioned any thing of the afflictive evils of life, such as Fear, and Pain, and Grief

for worldly croſſes and diſappointments, is that *Nature* carries men to ſeek reſt from theſe; whereas I am now ſpeaking of thoſe deſires, which in a more peculiar manner take their riſe from a principle of *Grace*; and becauſe too, to thoſe who *ſeek firſt the kingdom of heaven and the righteouſneſs thereof*, an exemption from all theſe evils ſhall be added of courſe, that there may be nothing to hinder the ſoul from giving itſelf intirely to the divine pleaſures which that world abounds with.

2. The hope which gracious ſouls are at preſent begoten to of the compleat fruition of the ſupreme good, begun only in this life, makes them proteſt with the greateſt earneſtneſs againſt living always upon earth. In this world the injoyment of God is begun, and there is ſomething ſo unſpeakably ſweet in this diſtant converſe with the all-perfect Being, that they cannot be at reſt till they *ſee him face to face*, and are received into the moſt ſecret receſſes of his love. There are a great many *pleaſures*, ſuch as they are, beſides this, in this lower world, but no *ſatisfaction*. The pleaſures of *ſin* are turbulent and diſquieting, and the pleaſures of *ſenſe*, whether ſinful or not, either taſteleſs, or cloying; but now the delights that flow from communion with God are divine, they penetrate to the inmoſt part of the ſoul, and becauſe they pleaſe our better part, are therefore

fore always pleasing; whereas what is founded in fancy, will please and displease by turns, as the fancy happens to change. What more godlike pleasure can there be than to survey infinite fulness and perfection? What more contenting than to be able to add, all this goes to the making up of my portion? What so refreshing as to feel his presence enlivening all the powers of my nature, whose power is the stay of the whole creation, and his favour the happiness of the reasonable part of it? If this imperfect state will not admit of the good man's being always in transports, he yet injoys a repose and serenity, a smooth and cordial joy, which far exceeds all other pleasures; all other pleasures, I mean, that mortals are acquainted with, but falls as much short, and even more, of the pleasures of immediate vision, and of compleat union and injoyment. There is to be a time when *God shall be all in all*; all things in all persons; he shall be in all [y] *angelical* and *human* spirits that inhabit those bright mansions, diffused through all, as a quickening soul, actuating all; he shall be in every one, and every one shall find him to be all; all that they can wish and desire, all that they can conceive, all that is adorable, excellent, kind, and good; they shall find all sumed up, after a most perfect manner, in One God; all the reasons of

 existence,

[y] 1 Cor. xv. 28.

exiſtence, all the ideas of truth, all the examples or patterns of beings, all the ſprings of pleaſure, all the names and denominations of good.

God is not barely the *object* of the heavenly felicity, but the *author* of it too. Seeing of God is an act of the Soul. And we cannot imagine that the Soul will have no other pleaſures but thoſe which reſult from an act of its own; it is not credible that the Soul alone ſhould be active, and God only offer himſelf as the object of its contemplations. We are to conceive of a vital energy, or operation, continually proceeding from God, a perpetual influence, not unheeded by us as now, but attended with the moſt exquiſite perceptions of delight. He created the Soul; he underſtands its frame; he can derive happineſs to it by all its faculties, not barely ſuch a happineſs as follows upon the natural exerciſe of theſe faculties, but a happineſs that is cauſed by the impreſſions he makes on them. And who, with the *tongue of Angels*, could deſcribe the bleſſedneſs that muſt ariſe from this intercourſe of created ſpirits made perfect with the uncreated Spirit, the all-perfect, almighty, all-ſufficient God of ſpirits, acting with the utmoſt rectitude, and vigour of all their powers, and acted, without ceaſing, by that Being who is light and life and love? This is what the chriſtian hopes for; and this hope of the perfect and everlaſting fruition of God

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is better to him than all the possessions of the world could be without it; I believe I may say, affords more joy to the mind than the present imperfect injoyment of the same divine object can do. What more excellent than the *object* of this hope, the ever-blessed God, manifesting himself in the impresses and reflections of his divine attributes? What more firm and stable than the *foundation* of this hope, the immutable promise of God? But then let this hope be never so precious, a man would not always live in a state of unaccomplished hope. Hope in its very nature betrays want, supposes absence, and adds wings to the desires; and therefore while it makes a person happy in some degree, must needs be inconsistent with perfect happiness; such as is that of the saints in light, who are too happy to be capable of hope, properly so called, and too secure of the continuance of their happiness to fear.

3. *Grace* cannot but vent itself in the language of the text, on the account of the near relation which the christian hath to the upper world. On earth the people of God are, and ever were *strangers* and *pilgrims*, as perhaps they would have been, in some regard, in *paradise* itself, from whence they would have been translated, after the appointed time of their trial had been ended, to higher mansions. But then this world, had not sin entered, though it might have been

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but a place to ſojourn in for a while, would not have been an hoſtile country as it now is. Now the chriſtian lives both among ſtrangers and enemies, enemies to God, and enemies to his ſoul; but this is his comfort that he ſhall not always do ſo; his home is in heaven, that is his father's houſe, his true, if not his native, country, where he hath his *converſation* and freedom now, and ſhall, at laſt, behold that dear, that divine, Perſon, his Saviour, and, as he condeſcends to ſtyle himſelf, his *Friend* and *Brother*, whom he loves more than all. [z] *Him having not ſeen he loves*; but becauſe he loves him, he cannot be contented never to ſee him. Let the hand of *Death* draw the veil that ſeparates him from that ſight, ſince that is the only way in which it can be done. There he ſhall have the ſociety of Angels, thoſe ſuperior beings, thoſe friendly and miniſtering ſpirits, to whom he hath been obliged for a thouſand kind offices, they did him unſeen, in the courſe of his pilgrimage. Thither his beſt friends are gone, or will ſhortly go, where he ſhall ſee them gathered in one general aſſembly with all thoſe faithful witneſſes of God that have lived in the ſeveral ages of the world; every one glorious and happy, with *Jeſus* at their head, in *glory*, as in *merit*, tranſcending all. And is there that chriſtian (I mean one that is truly ſuch) who

[z] 1 Pet. i. 8.

who will say, *he had rather live always in this world*, where he is gazed on as a foreigner in the dress and manner of his conversation, and hath his very Being, and short abode, grudged him, rather than join that blessed society? Is there one, so much as one, to be found, who while his kindred souls are taking their flight all around him from the several parts and regions of the earth, would be left behind, and settle here forever, if it could be done? No certainly; if there be any thing agreeable in his present situation, that which makes it so, next to the shinings of God's face, is the presence and conversation of christian friends, of those who are *of one heart*, and, as to the main things, *of one mind*, with himself, embarked in the same interest, and travelling to the same place, where he hopes to meet, and dwell with them forever. He hath the satisfaction to *walk in company with these to the house of God*; or to know that they are living upon earth, and that they are the *salt* and the *light* of it; and to join with them *in spirit*, in acts of prayer and praise on each other's behalf, and all other parts of worship suitable to the militant state. Were all these gone, what a wearisome place would the world be? More unhappy than *Lot* in *Sodom* he would cry out in the affectionate language of the divine *Psalmist*, [a] *O that I had*

[a] Psal. lv. 6.

had wings like a dove, then would I fly away and be at reſt.

One thing that occaſioned *Elijah*'s requeſt that God would take his life from him, ſeems to have been his apprehenſion, that the children of Iſrael having forſaken his covenant, and [b] thrown down his alters, and ſlain his prophets with the ſword, he only was left; all the prophets, as he thought, being killed, and few or none of the people to be found who had not *bowed the knee to Baal.* And the like obſervation may be made concerning the *mourning Prophet* [c], who, on a view of the great calamities and univerſal corruption of the Jewiſh people, breaks forth into this paſſionate exclamation; *Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the ſlain of the daughter of my people! Oh that I had in the wilderneſs a lodging place of way-faring men, that I might leave my people and go from them!* Now if a ſcarcity, and much more the total want of the true worſhipers of God, and lovers of Jeſus, would make this earth appear ſo diſmal to the ſolitary chriſtian, muſt not the conſideration that heaven is inhabited by none but pure and happy ſpirits, *a multitude without number*, inflame and draw forth his deſires after that ſtate of conſummate holineſs, and endleſs felicity?

4. *God*

[b] 1 Kings xix. 14. [c] Jer. ix. 1, 2.

4. [d] *God hath wrought the souls of the faithful to the self same thing, and giving them the earnest of the Spirit. In this* fleshly *tabernacle they groan, being burthened* with their manifold wants and sins and sufferings; and having [e] *received the first fruits of the Spirit, they groan within themselves, waiting for the adoption, that is to say, the redemption of their bodies,* and the compleat and everlasting salvation of their souls. This divine Spirit, by a light which he sheds upon the mind, inables them more clearly to discern their title to the heavenly blessedness; and by so doing, excites in them more fervent desires after it. By assisting the soul in its self-inquiries, and whispering the love of God to it, this good Spirit [f] *beareth witness with their spirits that they are the children of God; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ;* fills them with heavenly hope, and sometimes, though not often, doth so invigorate and inlarge their hope that it grows up into full and triumphant assurance. And then nothing but the prospect of being yet further serviceable to the cause and interest of their Redeemer can reconcile them to a longer stay in the body. The same almighty Spirit refreshes pious souls at some *festival* times (if I may so call them) with more exuberant fore-

[d] 2 Cor. v. 4, 5. [e] Rom. viii. 23.
[f] Rom. viii. 16, 17.

foretaſtes of heavenly bliſs; as when they are entered into the depth of holy meditation, are pouring out their deſires in ſecret before the throne of God, or commemorating the Saviour of the world at his Table, with the remembrance of whoſe dying love they are even carried out of themſelves; on ſuch ſpecial occaſions, I ſay, the Spirit of God opens all the ſprings of ſacred joy, which here upon, does as it were ſwell and overflow the ſoul. And in thoſe diſtinguiſhing moments (for, oh, like moments they ſuddenly paſs away!) how worthleſs doth the world appear, and every thing in it by which it ſeeks to win its affection, and to invite its ſtay. Oh, when ſhall I come and appear before God in his temple above? When ſhall I drink of the fountain of life, that I may never thirſt more?—Theſe then are the cauſes, by one, or more, or all, of which men are led to deſire their departure out of this life.

The time will not allow to be ſo large in the Application of this ſubject as the near concernment we have in it ſeems to demand. However ſomething I muſt ſay.

1. By the things we have now heard we are directed in what manner **we** ought to ſtand affected to the preſent life; that, on the one hand, we ſhould not *loath* or *deſpiſe* it; nor, on the other hand, be *fooliſhly fond* of it, and averſe to reſign it, but prepared to

to make a ready sacrifice of it at his command who gave it. Several things may concur to *excuse*, but nothing will *justify* our saying as *Job* does---*I loath it*---life on such terms is my abhorrence. Should we speak thus when we are most grievously afflicted, we should offend against the sovereignty and wisdom of that God who orders every thing that befals us in life; and not only against his wisdom and sovereign dominion, but his goodness too, which doth not send any affliction, whether lighter or heavier, undeserved, or without an eye to our final felicity. We should likewise hereby lay open a heart working with secret discontent, or at best, not so intirely subdued to the divine will and disposal as it ought to be. Neither must we *despise* life, because our days are vanity, empty of real good, any more than we are allowed to *loath* it, when it is fullest of evils. We might be under strong temptations to do this, if Death terminated our prospect, and there was nothing beyond but night and emptiness. But when we consider, that this life is but the *infancy*, or at best, *childhood* of our beings, (to which it is compared by the great Apostle *St. Paul*[g]) that it is the time alloted us for the trial of our faith and obedience, in which we are to be trained up for maturity of bliss; this momentary, this otherwise trifling existence of ours,

[g] 1 Cor. xiii. 10, 11.

ours, becomes in this view, a thing of the greateſt concern and importance to us imaginable, becauſe it determines, once for all, what our following eternity ſhall be. And if, as this life affords us an opportunity of obtaining an everlaſting reward, we have ſo improved the grace received as not to neglect this invaluable opportunity, we cannot be too thankful for this life to the great Author of it, by whom it is deſigned for the introduction to a happier, and never-ending exiſtence.

Shall I add this further admonition, that we ought not to be too impatient in our deſires to go hence, even when this impatience is not bred by any thing diſpleaſing to us in the preſent life, but purely by the high eſteem we have of the promiſed recompence, and our being ſo wholly ſwallowed up in the contemplations of it, and the exerciſes of devotion preparatory to it, that we have a kind of indignation againſt life for being ſo long, and ſpend our time too much as if we were not among the inhabitants of this world, and had no buſineſs in it? Alas, ſuch a caution as this is ſeldom needed. Happy ſouls that are under this temptation! How few ſuch are to be found! However, if ſuch there be, they are to be minded, that this is really a fault to which they are tempted, though the temptation be of ſuch a kind that it can befal none but perſons of the moſt

most eminent piety and goodness; and that the desire of the reward hath something irregular and excessive in it, as often as they repine to stay out the appointed time of labour and service. That which leads them into this error is a very good reason why, on the other hand, none of the truly religious should be averse to quit this life, at the proper season, when they are to receive one of infinitely greater value in the room of it. A simple and unthinking partiality indeed, for a wilderness, in which they have wandered so long, seeking rest and finding none, to turn back their eye and heart towards it, just as they are upon the borders of *Canaan*, and about to take possession of the promised land. Of the two, an impatience of life, occasioned by a weight of zeal, not imaginary troubles, and a well grounded hope of deliverance from them, is more pardonable than such a blind and excessive love to it. But better than both these, is an intire willingness to wait God's time for our return from this state of banishment; out of a setled persuasion that his time must be best, and the pleasure we have in serving God while he hath any work for us to do; and when that time is come, to depart, let what will hang upon us, and draw us back.

2. We are further instructed in the method we must pursue, if we intend to be thus rightly affected towards this present

mortal life. We muſt put out ſouls under the conduct and influence of divine Grace. We muſt not be ſatisfied till we feel this heavenly principle beat ſtrong in our boſoms; and we muſt be ſure to cheriſh it, and tend it, even with more care than our *firſt parents* in innocence did the nobleſt plants of paradiſe; avoiding whatever would choak it, as all immoderate cares, compared in ſcripture to thorns, will do; or ſtarve its growth, which is the effect of the pleaſures of life, not injoyed with temperance and moderation; or finally blaſt it with its poiſonous influence, which is what we have reaſon to fear from every ſinful action, and much more, from every evil cuſtom and habit. And on the other hand, we muſt heedfully obſerve, and diligently practiſe all thoſe wiſe rules by which the life and power of religion are promoted in the ſoul; ſuch as growing in the knowledge of God and divine things, and frequent meditation on them; by means of which latter, from the light which is in the underſtanding, a ſacred warmth is derived into the will and affections; a life abounding in good works; being much in ſecret prayer, and attending upon the ordinances of divine worſhip in publick; particularly, laying hold of every opportunity of meeting our Lord at his Table, and puting, and keeping our hearts in the beſt preparation we can for it. Were theſe things conſtantly practiſed by

by us, Grace would be more and more victorious, and make us to triumph with it, trampling on all the power of the enemy, despising what is usually called the *glory of the world*, and *rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.*

Among all the graces of the Spirit, I would recommend holy love, the love of God and of Jesus, as peculiarly useful to preserve us at an equal distance from each extreme; for, was this love the reigning passion of my soul, and its power still increasing, how should I prize life as an opportunity of promoting the interest of those I love best? And with what joy resign it, to go and meet my God and Saviour? Like the blessed Apostle, who had a desire to depart, because Death, by bringing him where Christ was, would be his gain; yet was not set against living longer in a state of absence from Christ, because he loved him too well to decline any further labours and sufferings, by which he might contribute to the furtherance of his kingdom, and of the Faith and joy of his people; which seems to be the principal thing meant by him when he saith, [h] *To me to live is Christ.*

With a temper and posture of soul like this, did that excellent Servant of God, whose Remains we lately saw commited to the dust, meet her *last enemy*; if Death

[h] Phil. i. 21—25.

could be called her *enemy*; which, we have ground to believe, proved her entrance to glory and immortality; at a time of life, when the infirmities of age are very ſenſibly felt by many, but were not ſo by her, who ſeemed to have a ſtock of life remaining ſufficient to hold out many years longer. God was pleaſed to viſit her with a very ſore calamity *, that as ſhe had been uſeful in the former part of her days, as a pattern of the more active virtues of the chriſtian life, ſhe might not want an opportunity of adorning the goſpel of her Lord and Saviour, of magnifying the ſtrength of divine Grace, and the excellency of divine Conſolations; and in a word, of edifying all about her, by practiſing thoſe more difficult leſſons of *patience* and *reſignation*, under the ſevereſt preſſures, which our holy religion teaches us. And be it ſpoken to the praiſe of God's Grace, this Servant of his did not *faint in the day of adverſity*. Her ſubmiſſion to the will of her heavenly Father was tried for a long time together, and being *much more precious than gold that periſheth, though it be purified with fire, was now found unto honour and glory*; and will be ſo, much more, *at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt*. And when at length her caſe appeared hopeleſs of any remedy but the laſt, and ſhe had now done with the world, though ſhe had *a deſire to depart and be with*

* A cancer in her tongue.

with Christ, which she esteemed *far better* than the happiest part of her life had been, and much more then, than the remainder of it with which she was now strugling, yet she did not cast away her patience, of which she received a present recompence, in the undisturbed calm and tranquility of her soul. To this freedom from distresing doubts and fears on her dying bed, besides her patience, which hath been now mentioned, the just notions she had of the goodness and mercy of God, and the Grace of the Gospel, together with her regular and holy conversation from her youth up, did greatly contribute. She knew how to manage the duties of the *christian* and of *common* life so, that one should not interfere with the other; was a constant attendant in the *house of God* as long as she could be so; and not less mindful of her obligation to own him in the *family*, and to serve him in the *closet*; to which we may presume, she was not more determined by duty than by inclination. The advantage of such a life as this she found, to her great joy, at the approach of Death, when, from a consciousness of her own integrity, and a humble reliance on the merits of her Saviour, (which two, I believe I may say, *always* go together) she had that peace which the world, injoyed in the greatest perfection, cannot give, nor, when she was forever leaving it, was able to take away.

I will venture to mention one thing more; that as ſhe had choſen the way of *non-conformity*, and continued in it to the laſt, ſo, to a friend who viſited her on her ſick-bed, ſhe declared her intire ſatisfaction in what ſhe had done; which I do not obſerve, as laying any great ſtreſs on thoſe things that are the foundation of *names* and *parties* among chriſtians; all which I ſhould be heartily glad to ſee aboliſhed; but that I may have occaſion to recommend that *chriſtian temper*, which ought to be preſerved by all who agree in the weightier matters of religion, and expreſt by one towards another; of which we may take the *deceaſed* for an example, who did not, as too many do, want charity for thoſe in different ſentiments from herſelf; ſhe was of more generous notions, and of a more *catholick*, that is, a more *evangelical* ſpirit, than this comes to; and while ſhe followed the perſuaſions of her own mind, could eaſily admit that others might be ſincere in their profeſſion who did not think juſt as ſhe did, and had a cordial reſpect for all who appeared to walk according to our *common Rule*, and to love our *common Lord*. The holy Life, the peaceful Death, and honourable Memory of this Saint of God muſt yield great comfort to her *Deſcendants* and *Relatives*; and, they muſt give me leave to be their monitor, are an anſwerable obligation upon them to tread in her

ſteps

steps, and to be *followers of her as far as she was so of Christ.* To conclude.

Let us all so improve the *Word* and *Providence of God*, and the pious *Examples* of our friends, *departed in the Lord*, that we, henceforward, may pass a truer judgment on life than we have hitherto done, and be able to say (not out of *impatience* and *discontent*; not through indulgence to *nature only*, wearied out with affliction and trouble; nor, barely, on a *rational view* of things; but) as the voice of the *Grace* and *Spirit* of God within us, *I would not live* here *always*; nor, indeed, any *longer* than till *I have finished the work which God hath given me to do.*

The great Usefulness of good Examples duly attended to; and Encouragement to follow them.

A

Funeral Sermon

Occasioned by the

D E A T H

Of the Reverend

Mr. *Robert Darch*,

IN THE

LXV. Year of his Age.

1737.

TO

Mrs. *DARCH.*

MADAM,

IT is a conſiderable diminution in the value of all human friendſhips, that we are ſo often called to mourn with our Friends, under the various preſſures and afflictions of this mortal life, and at laſt to ſorrow for them at their departure out of it. Death, which is never far off, diſſolves the neareſt earthly ties. And what does this teach us but to place our truſt more in the unchangeable everlaſting God, who will never forſake us; and to look for our happineſs in that world, where the Society *is eternal, and their* Bleſſedneſs *the ſame; being made up of delights as durable as they are exalted and ſatisfying? Nothing tends more to give us an affecting view of our own mortality, than the Deaths of thoſe who were once* our other ſelves; *or to endear, and, as it were, conſecrate the memory of their Virtues, than the thought that we ſhall ſee and converſe with them no more in this world. Is that Perſon gone from me, whoſe Preſence and Converſation*

Converſation heightened all the ſatisfactions of life, and ſoftened all its cares and griefs? I conſider the grave is, *in a manner*, ready for me *too*; *there my* Body *muſt ſhortly be laid*; *no matter how ſoon, if my* Soul *be prepared for its flight to happier manſions, and I have diſpatched all my buſineſs here below. As oft as thoſe things come into my mind, which I ſo juſtly eſteemed in my late Companion, I have* pleaſure *mingled with* pain; pleaſure *to think of the happineſs which the owner of ſuch amiable qualities, and pious diſpoſitions, is gone to poſſeſs*; pain *from the reflection on my own loſs. Henceforth I will love that virtue and goodneſs more, for the ſake of which, I formerly loved the Perſon that was the Subject of them. I will call to mind the examples of my dear* Friends *and* Relatives *departed in the Lord, and thoſe bequeathed the world by the long ſucceſſion of witneſſes to the power of religion in the ſeveral ages of it*; *to the end, that, forgeting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to the things that are before, I may preſs towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.*

May this Diſcourſe *which was firſt preached, and is now publiſhed, at your requeſt, help to entertain a ſolitary hour, and be of ſome uſe to excite the Relations and Acquaintance of the* Deaceaſed, *or any others, to behave as followers of the ſame Jeſus, and expectants of the ſame Heaven, and I have my aim.*

Madam,

Madam, *My heart's desire and prayer to God is, That you may enjoy those assistances and consolations which Religion only can bestow; have the satisfaction to see the surviving* Branches *of your Family eminently blest of God, and blessings to the World; and when your pilgrimage here on earth is at an end, enter into that Rest which remaineth for the People of God.* I am,

MADAM,

Your most Obliged,

Humble Servant,

HENRY GROVE.

SERMON IX.

The great Uſefulneſs of good Examples.

HEB. XIII. 7, 8.

Remember them that have had the rule over you, who have ſpoken unto you the word of God; whoſe faith follow, conſidering the end of their converſation.

Jeſus Chriſt the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and forever.

AMONG that great variety of motives and arguments, by which the Penmen of holy ſcripture, according to the wiſdom given unto them, indeavour to excite their readers to conſtancy in the profeſſion and practice of the true religion, that taken from

from examples of eminent virtue and piety is not the leaſt conſiderable. The Author of this *Epiſtle* thought it needful, in ſeveral places, to propoſe it to the believing *Hebrews*, in order to prevent their falling off from Chriſtianity, or growing cold and indifferent in their affection to it, upon the account of thoſe ſufferings and reproaches to which it expoſed them. The *Truth* being in itſelf well worth owning, and having been always zealouſly owned and eſpouſed by the beſt part of mankind, he exhorts them not to be *ſlothful* (unactive, cowardly, weak) *but followers of them who through Faith and Patience inherited the Promiſes* [a]. In the Eleventh Chapter he preſents them with a long and glorious roll of Worthies, remarkable for that *Faith* which is *the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen* [b]; to the intent that, *being compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes, they might lay aſide every weight, and the ſin that did moſt eaſily beſet them, and run with patience the race ſet before them.* Theſe inſtances were more peculiarly adapted to anſwer the writer's aim, in this reſpect, that the perſons enumerated, being ſuch whoſe names were honourably recorded in their own ſcriptures, and many of them heads and founders of their race, it was to be ſuppoſed they would pay more regard to their memory and virtues, than to thoſe of others,

[a] Heb. vi. 12. [b] Chap. xi. 1. xii. 1.

others, with whose actions they had little or no acquaintance.

He then proceeds to put them in mind of some *Examples* that concerned them more directly as *Christians*; chiefly that of *Jesus*, [c] *the author and finisher of their Faith*; *who, for the joy set before him, willingly endured the cross, despising the shame*; *and is now set down on the right-hand of the throne of God.* In the words of the text he commends to their remembrance some that had formerly been their spiritual *Guides*, and had *spoken unto* them *the word of God*; *whose Faith* he exhorts them to *follow*, *considering the end of their conversation*; and that *Jesus Christ* is *the same yesterday*, *and to day*, *and forever*.

There are these *three* Observations that naturally arise out of the words.

The *First* is on the nature of the *Pastoral Office*; together with the genuine character or description of those that behave well in it, and thereby deserve to be held in reputation while they live, and remembered with honour after their deaths.

The *Second* is concerning the singular advantage of recollecting the shining virtues of worthy persons, as patterns of our imitation; those especially that have been of our nearer acquaintance, and to

[c] Heb. xii. 2.

whom we have borne a more immediate and particular relation.

The *Third* and *Laſt* Obſervation, with which I ſhall cloſe and enforce the application of the former, is on the abundant incouragement which chriſtians, in all ages, have, to ſhew the ſame dilligence to the full aſſurance of hope unto the end; inaſmuch as *Jeſus Chriſt*, their common Lord, is the *ſame yeſterday, and to day, and forever.*

I. Let us obſerve, and briefly conſider, the nature of the *Paſtoral or Miniſterial Office*; together with the genuine character or deſcription of thoſe who behave well in it, and thereby deſerve to be held in reputation while they live, and remembered with honour after their deaths.

1. The nature and deſign of the *Office* may be gathered from the *Title* given to the perſons intruſted with it, and the *Buſineſs* they are imployed in. Their *Title* is that of *Guides*; their *Buſineſs* to *ſpeak*, or *preach* the *Word of God.* They are *Guides* to others in the worſhip of God, and in the way to immortality. God leadeth his people, like a flock, by their hand, through the wilderneſs of this world, to the heavenly *Canaan.* They are *Paſtors* and *Guides*; not *Rulers*, in the modern

modern notion of that word, whether singly or conjointly.

Our translation indeed sounds to this sense; *Remember them that have* (or rather, that *have had*, the persons intended being departed out of this life) *the* RULE *over you*; but the truer rendering is that in the margin *Guides. Remember your Guides*; for, as the original word, ηγουμενοι, does not necessarily carry in it the idea of *authority*, so there is no ground for affixing that sense to it here; nor does it appear that our blessed Saviour ever intended to delegate any part of his authority to his Ministers, but rather the contrary; both from the nature of the christian profession, which is to be intirely free, and from those words of our Lord to the *Twelve*, when they discovered an inclination to strive about power and pre-eminence; [d] *Ye know that the Princes of the* Gentiles *exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.*

It must be owned, in the 17th verse of this Chapter, where the same word occurs again, it is said, *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves*; but the meaning is no more than this, that they were to *obey the Truth*, as the expression is elsewhere;

[d] Mat. xx. 25, 26, 27. Luke xxii. 25.

or the [e] *Word of God*, faithfully delivered by them; not to obey them, in things which had no foundation in that *Word*. They were to ſubmit to the exhortations and counſels given them, relating to a holy and heavenly converſation. What immediately follows, evidently determines this to be the ſenſe of the words *obedience* and *ſubmiſſion*, in this place; *for they watch for your ſouls, as they that muſt give account*; *that they may do it with joy, and not with grief*; being able to glorify God for your receiving the word with readineſs of mind, and not barely a profeſſed, but real and intire ſubjection to it.

And whereas it may be further pleaded in favour of *eccleſiaſtical authority*, that we read of [f] *Governments* as an office in the chriſtian church, and of ſome that [g] *ruled*; beſides its being doubtful what the exact meaning of theſe words is, and, probable, that no ſuch thing is intended by them as proper, perſonal *authority*, it is enough to obſerve, that whatever power was lodged in certain perſons *at that time*, for the better managing and ordering the affairs of the church of Chriſt, then planting in the world, there were extraordinary gifts attended it, which at once juſtified the *claim* to it, and abundantly qualified for the regular and beneficial *exerciſe* of it. Theſe extraordinary gifts ceaſing, the power that

[e] Gal. iii. 1. and Prov. v. 13. xv. 32.
[f] 1 Cor. xii. 28. [g] Rom. xii. 8. 1 Tim. v. 7.

that was ſupported and conducted by them, ceaſed of courſe with them. Power, even in *civil States and Societies*, is a dangerous thing, a ſort of *edge-tool*, which few know how to uſe as they ſhould, and by that means frequently becomes an inſtrument of miſchief; but, the preſent circumſtances of mankind requiring it, and the advantages, upon the whole, outweighing the inconveniences, it is therefore veſted in perſons appointed thereto by the community. But now in the *church*, which is conſtituted for quite different ends and purpoſes, as there is no need of any other *authority*, properly ſo called, beſides that of Chriſt himſelf, ſpeaking to us in the ſcriptures, ſo the conſequences of the abuſe of ſuch *authority*, where it is unjuſtly uſurped, are ſo exceedingly pernicious to religion and the ſouls of men, that we have great reaſon to acknowledge the wiſdom and goodneſs of our Saviour, the one lawgiver of the church, in not truſting this power to any of his followers, by which they might be tempted, and enabled to tyrannize over their fellow-ſubjects.

The reſult is, that the Miniſters of the goſpel are ſimply *Paſtors*, *Guides*, and *Teachers*, in the chriſtian church; that they have no dominion over the faith, or conſciences, or perſons of men, but are only [h] *helpers of their joy*; obliged *to feed the flock of God, and to*

[h] 2 Cor i. 24. 1 Pet. v. 2, 3.

take the over-ſight thereof, not by conſtraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre's ſake, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but examples to the flock. They are not to *teach for doctrines the commandments of men*, or their own private fancies, and groundleſs opinions; but are to *ſpeak the Word of God*, the pure unmixed doctrine of the goſpel, as far as they are able to find it out by the moſt dilligent and impartial ſearch of the ſcriptures; not [i] *walking in craftineſs, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifeſtation of the truth, commending themſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God*; inſtructing the ignorant; having compaſſion upon, and reclaiming thoſe that are out of the way; ſatisfying the doubting, and comforting the feeble-minded.

The ſcriptures are the common rule of faith and practice, both to Miniſters and People; and though it be the Miniſter's part to interpret and apply the ſcripture in the beſt manner he is able; yet, after all, he is to leave the People to judge and determine for themſelves. Nor have the Miniſters of the goſpel any juſt reaſon to regret their having no greater power than this in religious matters, as thoſe among them, that are wiſe and humble, will not regret it; but think it their happineſs that they are freed from the temptation. Let them only take care to diſcharge their

[i] 2 Cor. iv. 2.

their office well, so as to merit the character given of those in the *text*, and it will gain them a secret empire over the minds and affections of people, by the force of truth, *the armour of righteousness on the right hand, and on the left*; and the constraining efficacy of a strict and heavenly conversation; a much nobler sort of power than that of dictating right and wrong, modes and ceremonies of worship, and articles of belief. Let their *faith*, and *holiness*, and *constancy* be fit to be recommended to imitation; and in that case they will not be likely to want their share of respect among men, and may be sure they shall not fail of the approbation and acceptance of God, which is of infinitely greater importance to them; this, I say, is to be their aim in the discharge of their holy function, this being

2. The genuine character or description of those who behave rightly in it, and thereby deserve to be held in reputation while they live, and remembered with honour after their deaths. In these things was the commendation founded of those spiritual *Guides* whom the *text* celebrates. They *spoke the Word of God*, not the words of men; not only as to the general *foundation*, but the *superstructure* they built upon it, keeping close to their instructions, or the plan marked out to them by *revelation*; and [k] *did not shun to declare*

[k] Acts xx. 27.

the whole councel of God, out of fear that ſome part of it might not be ſo acceptable. By their *faith* is either meant their belief of the ſufficiency of the goſpel revelation, without any help from the *law of Moſes*, which the judaizing chriſtians were exceeding fond of joining with it; * or their ſtedfaſt hope and truſt in God for all needful ſupplies of grace and conſolation in the way, and for eternal life and glory at the end; or, finally, their extraordinary fidelity in the diſcharge of their miniſterial function; in the laſt of which, as well as in the other two, they were *proper Examples*, not only to other Miniſters, though to them chiefly, but to the whole body of chriſtian believers; juſt as in a great houſe, notwithſtanding the diverſity of truſts and imployments, the duty of every ſervant being, in general, the ſame, *viz.* to be zealouſly attached to the intereſt of his maſter, and to ſerve him with all faithfulneſs and dilligence; whatever ſervant acquires an uncommon character in theſe reſpects, he may very well be propoſed as a pattern to all his fellow-ſervants, be the nature of their poſts never ſo different: and, when it is added, *conſidering the end of their converſation*, it is further implied, that their converſation had been truly chriſtian and upright; adorned with integrity of manners, meekneſs, gentleneſs,

* This ſenſe ſeems to be confirmed by the following verſes.

neſs, charity, and every other virtue becoming the Goſpel, and perſons intruſted with the diſpenſation of it; and that with the moſt unſhaken conſtancy and reſolution of mind, they perſevered in this courſe to the end of their lives, neither ſeduced by the intiſements of pleaſure, nor diſheartened by any ſufferings and inconveniences which they were either threatened with, or actually ſuſtained *for righteouſneſs ſake.* To this ſenſe is the word ἔκβασις, which we tranſlate the *End of their converſation* to be explained; it denotes their manner of concluding life, and departing out of it; they [l] *endured to the end*, were [m] *ſtedfaſt and immoveable*; did not only *run well* for ſome time, but [n] *finiſh their courſe with joy*, and bear their *dying* as well as *living* teſtimony to the religion they had taught. This was their character, and is ſo, in a greater or leſſer degree, of all the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt.

II. The next Obſervation is concerning the ſingular advantage of recollecting the ſhining virtues of worthy perſons, as patterns of our imitation; thoſe eſpecially of our nearer acquaintance, and to whom we have borne a more immediate and particular relation.

Man

[l] Matt. x. 22. [m] Gal. v. 7. [n] Acts xx. 24.

Man is ſo formed by nature, that Examples have a very great influence upon him, whether good or bad. And though the bad uſually do more to corrupt, than good examples to purge and reform the world, yet theſe too have their effect, and that very conſiderable upon the well diſpoſed; nor are bad Examples altogether without their uſe to ſuch; which is probably one reaſon that it hath ſeemed good to the Holy Ghoſt to tranſmit inſtances of both ſorts to all generations in the ſacred Scriptures, Examples of wickedneſs and impiety, as rocks which we ſhould heedfully ſhun; Examples of ſanctity and religion, as lights to direct us, and well drawn copies to write after, ſome few things excepted, which are likewiſe marked out to us.

There are *four* kinds of patterns ſet before us in holy Scripture, *viz.* the great and ever-bleſſed God, the fountain and centre of all perfection, by their conformity to whom, the goodneſs and excellence of all other intelligent Beings are to be eſtimated, and whom therefore it concerns us *to follow* or imitate [o] *as dear children*, being [p] *perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.* [q] Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God, and the *Apoſtle, and High-Prieſt of our Profeſſion*, from whom we are to learn what we ought to be, how we ought to act, and in what manner we ſhould

[o] Eph. v. 1. [p] Matt. v. 48. [q] Heb. iii. 1.

ſhould be prepared to *ſuffer*; [r] *walking as he walked*; [f] *having the ſame mind in us that was in him*; [t] *and conſidering him who endured ſuch contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, leſt we be weary and faint in our minds.* The holy Angels, whom we acknowledge it our duty to emulate, when we pray that [u] *the will of God may be done on earth as it is in heaven.* And, finally, of Men of like paſſions, and natural frailties with ourſelves; but, however, diſtinguiſhed from the multitude by the fair and bright Example which they ſet and left the world in their ſeveral places and generations, in which their light ſhon before men. Each of theſe models hath its peculiar circumſtances to render the ſerious contemplation of it uſeful to us; but it is the laſt of them only that my preſent Subject calls me to treat of. And here

1. Let us conſider ſome of the advantages that we may reap from good Examples in general.

They have a manifeſt tendency to eſtabliſh us in the belief of the true Religion; which appears with a more convincing evidence when we behold a lovely counter-part of its divine Doctrines, and admirable Precepts in the lives and actions of thoſe that profeſs it. By this means the *Truth* is, as it were, cloathed with a body and hath life, and

[r] 1 John ii. 6. [f] Phil. ii. 5.
[t] Heb. xii. 3. [u] Matt. vi. 10.

and breath, and motion. Chriſtianity hath been repreſented by ſome, as a weak and uſeleſs inſtitution, which leaves mankind as bad as it found them; but very unjuſtly, ſince the world was not only enlightened, but very much reformed by it in many reſpects, as might very well be expected from that great increaſe of light and knowledge which broke in upon it from this ſingle ſource; and the Examples of an exalted piety, a diffuſive benevolence, an heroic patience and fortitude, a generous forgiveneſs of the greateſt injuries, and a heavenly temper of mind, have been vaſtly more numerous from the time that the goſpel came to be known to men. If we ſtep back to the firſt riſe of our Religion, we find ourſelves incompaſſed with *a great Cloud of Witneſſes.* A very early Writer of the Chriſtian Church, * ſpeaking of the Apoſtles, eſpecially *Peter* and *Paul*, hath this remarkable Paſſage. "To theſe, men who led a divine "life, there was an acceſſion of a vaſt mul-"titude of elect (or excellent) perſons, who, "having ſuffered many reproaches and tor-"ments, became a moſt beautiful Example "among us." Nor, bleſſed be God, are our own times, at this diſtance from the birth of Chriſtianity, ſo barren of laudable Examples, as not to be able to furniſh many, in whom we have a viſible demonſtration of the

* Clemens Rom. *ad* Cor. *Ep.* 1.

the beauty and energy of thoſe principles from which their virtues may be ſhewn naturally to flow. The Cauſe is known by its Effects, the Fountain by the Streams.

Such Examples are alſo corrective; they ſtrongly work upon the principle of an ingenuous ſhame, where there are any tolerable remains of it, and thereby contribute to make the bad man good, and the good man better. As a deformed Object is never ſo diſcernable, ſo diſguſting, ſo like itſelf, as when it is ſet near one that is beautiful, ſo Vice does then appear in the moſt odious ſhape and colours, when it is brought into a compariſon with Virtue. The ſinners conſcience reproaches him with the wiſe choice and the regular rational conduct of the good man, as well as with his own faults and follies. And even the good man himſelf, when he ſees another that excels him, either in the general character of goodneſs, or in ſome particular quality and attainment, is humbled under a ſenſe of thoſe imperfections, which would otherwiſe, perhaps, have given him little or no uneaſineſs. "O my "Soul, think of the heights that others have "reached, their exactneſs, their zeal, their "courage, their unwearied activity; think of "this, and bluſh that thou ſhouldſt come ſo "far behind them! What credit are they, "or were they to Religion! What inſtances "of its divine and ſupernatural power! Ah, "what

" what a difference do I find in myſelf from " them! How little is Religion endebted to " me! How little is the Goſpel adorned by " me! Were there no better proofs of the Di- " vinity of the chriſtian *Faith* than thoſe " which my temper and life will ſupply, ah, " how ſoon would its reputation ſink, and the " ground it had won in the world be again " loſt!" The Example of *Chriſt*, though incomparably more perfect than any other, yet ſeems, in this reſpect, leſs fitted to ſhame us; that it does not appear ſo wonderful in him, who was a *man* indeed, but not a *fallen* or a *mere man*. When we compare our lives with his, we are not ſo apt to be overwhelmed with confuſion at ſight of the great diſparity betwixt them, becauſe we do not pretend to be *the Sons of God* in the ſenſe he was, or to be endowed with the *Spirit* in the ſame boundleſs meaſure. Let us therefore behold mortal, ſinful men, born, in all reſpects, like ourſelves, and upon our own level, yet by Faith triumphing over all the temptations of the world, the fleſh and the devil.

Again, there is a ſtrange attraction in a good Example; the light of it is truely ſweet, and its beauty alluring, and to a mind rightly prepared irreſiſtible. It ſeizes our eſteem, ſteals upon our affections, and ſo inſinuates itſelf into the ſoul, as, by inſenſible degrees, to transform it into the ſame likeneſs. The

Magnet

Magnet hath not only an attractive virtue itself, but communicates it to the Iron that touches it. So, under the influence of divine Grace, holy Examples seriously laid to heart, convey their own qualities into us, better our spirits, and make us become other men. To add no more on this head.

There is an animating power in the Examples of those that have acquited themselves well in the combat, and vanquished all the discouragements and temptations they have met with. This infuses life and spirit into others, and gives them resolution and courage to grapple with any difficulties, and to surmount all oppsition in the way of their duty. The Apostle *James* would have the christian converts, to whom he writes, [w] *Take the prophets, that had spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.* The single Example of St. *Paul*, in a time of persecution, was of admirable use; for he tells us, that [x] *his bonds in Christ were manifest in the Palace, and in all other Places; and that many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by his bonds, were much more bold to speak the truth without fear.*

" Why should I faint or flinch, when so " many others have not done it? What, " though the confederacy in sin be strong; " yet all have not taken that side; I have " more

[w] James v. 10. [x] Phil. i. 13.

" more than enough to keep me in heart
" and in countenance. I am not alone in
" fighting the good fight of Faith; I am
" not alone in runing the chriſtian race;
" I am not the only perſon that hath en-
" countered with cenſure and hard treat-
" ment for adhering to the truth; I ſee the
" footſteps of others before me, who are
" at the ſame time well ſpoken of in this
" world, and rewarded in the world above.
" I am determined, by the Grace of God,
" to tread the ſame path, and to deſpiſe,
" like them, the allurements and terrors of
" the world, all that man can do for me,
" or againſt me. None of theſe things
" moved thoſe brave ſouls, [y] neither count-
" ed they life itſelf dear, when they were
" called to lay it down; and why then
" ſhould I? Under all the infirmities and
" preſſures of the preſent ſtate, I will la-
" bour to bear up as they did; and, though
" in this [z] *Tabernacle I groan* ſometimes,
" *being burthened*, at worſt, I will not rec-
" kon my burthens inſupportable; but, re-
" flecting with what calmneſs and tranqui-
" lity ſome have paſſed their days, will ſet
" myſelf to injoy the pleaſures of religion,
" and to be as happy in the meditations of
" God, and of Jeſus, and the exerciſes of
" Faith and Hope, of Virtue and Devotion,
" as I poſſibly can. I will try, at leaſt,
" whether

[y] Acts xx. 24. [z] 2 Cor. v. 4.

" whether I cannot have the ſame peace, " living and dying, which others have had, " and which I know not why I ſhould ut- " terly deſpair of attaining."——So that good Examples, in general, are exceeding uſeful.

2. There are particular advantages attending the conſideration of ſuch praiſe-worthy Examples as have fallen within the compaſs of our own knowledge.

Theſe add a new force to the Examples of antient times. Some are ready to call in queſtion the miracles wrought in the firſt ages of the Goſpel, for no other reaſon but that God does not ſee fit they ſhould be common, and vouchſafed to every generation. They never ſaw the blind reſtored to ſight, by the ſpeaking of a word; the lame healed, the dead raiſed to life, and are therefore ſo unreaſonable, as, in defiance of the moſt credible hiſtory, joined with a doctrine worthy of ſuch miraculous atteſtation, to doubt whether theſe things were ſo. And it would be the ſame as to thoſe inſtances of a uniform piety, and an unconquered faith and patience, that are conveyed down in the ſacred writings, if there were not others like them common to every age. In every age there have been thoſe who, if they have not ſuffered for religion, have yet, under the heavieſt ſufferings and afflictions of life, been ſupported by it; and, by the

ſteady practice of univerſal goodneſs, greatly praiſed it. Theſe modern Examples lead back our thoughts to thoſe of earlier times, eſpecially thoſe which the Scripture hath made immortal, are an additional confirmation of them, and ſerve not only to revive the impreſſion of them upon the mind and heart, but to render it deeper.

Theſe Examples too, being nearer, have commonly a greater, and more forcible influence than others. Not but that we are apt to admire things the more, the further off they are removed from us. In this caſe diſtance magnifies the object; but then, though admiration be oftenеſt raiſed by things remote, there are other paſſions which operate more ſtrongly according to the nearneſs of the object. Thus men are more liable to envy a contemporary, and one of the ſame place or country than thoſe of other nations, and of times long paſt; and as envy, the paſſion of bad men, and which ſhould be leſs, ſo emulation, or an ambition of imitating what hath been well done by others, is moſt powerfully ſtired up, in virtuous and generous minds, by Examples nigher home. When we conſider thoſe holy perſons that left the world long ago, we do not think their Examples ſo obliging upon us as thoſe of our own times and acquaintance; neither do they generally produce

duce in us ſuch a ſecret ſhame and uneaſineſs for the little reſemblance there is between them and us. Here others, as well as ourſelves, will be apt to make compariſons not at all to our credit.

In a word, theſe Examples are a ſenſible proof that God hath not withdrawn his Holy Spirit from the Church; but as there is, and always will be, a Viſible Church upon earth, a ſociety of men making an outward profeſſion of Chriſtianity, ſo Chriſt hath, and we have reaſon to think, always will have, his real diſciples and followers, thoſe that believe and truſt in him as their Saviour, obey him as their Lord, imitate him as their pattern, and openly confeſs him before men. If ſuch Examples are comparatively rare, it lies upon the profeſſors of Chriſtianity to make them more common; and ſo they might eaſily do, were they as intent upon their improvement in the graces and virtues of the divine life, as men often are on making a figure in the ſeveral profeſſions of this life to which they apply themſelves.

3. If there are any perſons of great piety and goodneſs, to whom we have borne a more immediate and particular relation, the Examples of ſuch are, or ought to be, more than ordinarily beneficial to us. Whether we have been members of *Families* that have been under their care, in the quality of *Children*, or *Servants*, or otherwiſe; or of *Re-*

ligious Societies, in which they have preſided as *Paſtors*. It is to be preſumed, that by our greater affection and regard to ſuch, we ſhall be better prepared to receive the influence of their pious Examples. We have been more conſtant witneſſes to their chriſtian behaviour, [a] *have more fully known their Doctrine, Manner of Life, Purpoſe, Faith, Long-ſuffering, Charity, Patience*, as the Apoſtle *Paul* tells his Son *Timothy* concerning himſelf. We have had the benefit of their Inſtructions, Reproofs, Admonitions, Prayers, and Counſels; and received peculiar teſtimonies of affection and kindneſs from them; ſo that we ſhall be the more inexcuſable, if having lived under the Inſtructions of ſuch perſons, inforced by a ſuitable Example, and by expreſſions of the moſt affectionate regard to our welfare, we are not at all like them. We muſt be bad indeed, to be never the better for being ſo placed and circumſtanced. It was a great aggravation of *Eli*'s Sons, that they had ſo good a man to their Father, and yet departed from the way in which they had not only been trained up by him, but had ſeen him walking before them.

4. Although living Examples have this advantage, that they are continually in our view, and not to be overlooked and forgoten by us, if we ſhould indeavour it, yet upon ſome

[a] 2 Tim. iii. 10.

ſome other accounts, the Examples of our pious Friends and Acquaintance that are removed out of the world by Death, are more likely to be regarded and followed. The Obſervation of the *Latin Poet* † is too often verified, " that men hate the virtue they " eſteem when it is before their eyes;" but then, as he adds, " thoſe very perſons ſhall " praiſe and lament it when taken from them;" becauſe that *Envy*, which would not ſuffer them to do juſtice to ſuperior merit dies together with, or not long after the object of it. " *Envy* then turns into *Love* and *Venera-* " *tion* ‡." Death ſtamps a kind of ſacred character upon deceaſed virtue, and draws a veil over any little blemiſhes that might formerly be mixed with it, and diminiſh the price of it; much as in a noble Statue, or fine piece of Painting, in which the juſteſt rules of proportion are obſerved, all thoſe roughneſſes and inequalities that diſpleaſed the eye when it was viewed too near, vaniſh at once as ſoon as it is placed at a proper diſtance. Perſons that have any taſte and value for true goodneſs are willing to forget thoſe imperfections of good men, dead and gone out of this world, which were

† Virtutem incolumem odimus,
Sublatam ex oculis quærimus invidi. *Hor.*

‡ —— Extinctus amabitur idem. *Hor.*
Præſentia invidia, præterita veneratione proſequimur. *Vell. Paterc.*

very much over-ballanced by their commendable qualities, and uſeful actions.

5. As the good Examples of perſons in every ſtation of life, whether higher or lower, more publick or private, are very ſerviceable, ſo particularly thoſe of pious and faithful *Miniſters* recommended in the *Text*. The unaffected *Devotion*, the amiable and active *Goodneſs* of a Preacher of the Goſpel, command attention and reſpect from his hearers, and, as it were, prepoſſeſs them in favour of every thing he ſays. They give *credibility* to his Doctrine, *weight* to his Counſels and Admonitions, *point* and *edge* to his Reproofs, and *efficacy* to his Exhortations. People will eaſily grant of ſuch a one, that [b] *he believes, and therefore ſpeaks*; that all his zeal is from an inward concern for the practice of holineſs, and the welfare of their immortal ſouls, when they ſee him take ſo much care of his own, and preſs them to no other things than ſuch as he himſelf is an Example of. And thus while a wicked Miniſter, or one that contradicts any part of his Doctrine in his conduct, deſtroys again thoſe things which he had built; a Miniſter whoſe life is a comment on his Sermons, *edifies the Body of Chriſt* by his chriſtian converſation, as well as by his [c] *aptneſs to teach*. ——This finiſhes the enlargement on the ſecond Obſervation which

[b] 2 Cor. iv. 13. [c] 1 Tim. iii. 2.

which the *Text* affords us, *viz.* the ſingular advantage of recollecting the ſhining virtues of worthy perſons, as patterns for our imitation; thoſe eſpecially of our nearer acquaintance, and to whom we have borne a more immediate and particular relation.

Let us then be ſo juſt to thoſe who have left a good Example behind them, particularly thoſe that have ſpoken to us the Word of God, and ſo kind to ourſelves, as to recal their Virtues to mind, and make them the object of our ſtudious imitation; *let us be followers of them*, as far as they were ſo of *Chriſt*, our general ſtandard, and laſt appeal, and no further. It is foretold and promiſed, that [d] *the Righteous ſhall be in everlaſting remembrance.* God, for his own honour, watches over their good name, and by his Providence preſerves their memory; and the world hath cauſe to perpetuate it for their own benefit. Examples of religion and virtue, of love to God and man, are like lights ſet up in the world for the direction of mankind in general, and for the comfort of God's People; ſome of which, like the lamps of heaven, extend their influence to all nations and times; ſuch are *Scripture Examples*, among which the pattern of our Bleſſed Lord ſhines as the Sun in the front of Heaven. Others are of narrower influence, and ſooner extinguiſhed as to us;

[d] Pſal. cxii. 6.

though as they ſhall [e] *ſhine* (forever) *as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father*, their acquaintance, or deſcendants, ſhould indeavour to make their virtues as long uſeful to themſelves and others, as they can, that the [f] *memory of the Juſt may be bleſſed.*

We ſhould be thankful to God for the inſtruction and conſolation of thoſe holy Examples that come to our knowledge, and oppoſe them to the ſinful ones which the world is ſo full of, in order to preſerve ourſelves from the general contagion; chuſing rather to follow a few that go right than the giddy wandering multitude. We ſhould be ready to mend and improve ourſelves by the glaſs which the lives of good men hold up to us, ſome of whom, perhaps, were remarkable for one virtue, others for another; ſome for more virtues, and in a more eminent degree; others for fewer, and thoſe, it may be, not ſo conſpicuous. However that be, we ſhould make the beſt of every Example, carefully ſeparating what merits our imitation from what does not; what does, we ſhould labour to equal, and, if we can, to excel; what does not, we ſhould take notice of, (not with pleaſure, not to feed an envious temper, not to expoſe it to an ill-natured and an ill-judging world, not to juſtify and incourage ourſelves in any thing unworthy the chriſtian character, droſs being

[e] Matt. xiii. 43. [f] Prov. x. 7.

ing never the more valuable for being mixed with gold; but) to be thereby excited to a more narrow ſcrutiny into our own conduct, and to frame and regulate it with more care. It is our own fault if we do not get ſomething by the *Failings*, and much more by the *good Qualities*, and *good Actions* of others, whether *Miniſters*, or *Parents*, or *Maſters*, or any of our dear *Friends* or *Relatives*; whether thoſe that we have known ourſelves, or thoſe that we have heard and read of; for the general reaſon is the ſame for all, *viz.* that what is true, juſt and lovely deſerves imitation; and being duly conſidered, would be of uſe to perſuade and engage us to imitate it. And here, at the ſame time that it falls in my way to take notice what a profitable ſort of *reading* the lives and characters of valuable and pious perſons would be, if well choſen, and judiciouſly drawn up, I cannot forbear lamenting that they ſhould too often be writen in ſuch a manner as to do hurt as well as good, if not more hurt than good; which I doubt is ſometimes the caſe. For, alas, ſuch performances generally run in the ſpirit of a Party; the things principally commended, and inculcated with the greateſt ardour, are not thoſe which make the difference between a religious character and the contrary; or between one more perfect in the ſcale of the chriſtian life, and another leſs ſo; but

ſuch

ſuch as the true diſciples of Chriſt, are diſtinguiſhed by one from another, the perſon whoſe character is embalmed from other chriſtians, who, perhaps, excel him much in ſober, rational piety, and the ſubſtantial uſeful virtues of the goſpel. You are entertained with the peculiarities of this or that denomination of chriſtians, the prejudices of education, the effects of natural temper and conſtitution; and it may be, ſuch things as, in the judgment of every wiſe reader, very much depretiate the character, and render it, upon the whole, dangerous to imitate. The conſequence of this too often is, that people learn to place a great part of religion in things that have nothing of it but the name; to cenſure better men than themſelves as in a lower form of chriſtianity, if not wholly unacquainted with the truth and power of it; and to think more highly of themſelves than they ought to think, as ſingularly good, and in the number of the moſt ſpiritual and perfect. But this only by the by.

Let me now, in few words, call upon you to remember the Example of that worthy Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe Death is the ſad occaſion of the preſent Diſcourſe; recommending it to all, and, in a particular manner to thoſe among whom he long ſpoke the Word of God, and adminiſtered the Ordinances of the goſpel, to follow his faith, conſidering the end of his converſation, which

was

was not barely inoffenſive, but holy and uſeful. Many things there were in this good man, this faithful ſervant of Chriſt, highly deſerving the obſervation of all. I ſhall beg leave to direct your eye to ſome of them. What *nature* began, *cuſtom*, aided by *divine grace*, carried on to a greater degree of perfection. He had a felicity of temper, a calmneſs and moderation in his paſſions, beyond moſt; which he ſo improved by his conſtant ſelf-government, that his mind ſeemed to be a region of perpetual ſerenity, unclouded and unruffled by intemperate affections. And this evenneſs and tranquility within, produced an anſwerable equality in his conduct, which was ever ſmooth and uniform. His religion ſat eaſy upon him, and made him eaſy and acceptable to all about him, being the reſult of a ſound and enlightened mind, not of miſtaken notions, nor ſpoiled by diſagreeable mixtures. He believed that men are free; free by the conſtitution of their nature to chooſe and to do good or evil; ſince without this liberty, nothing done by them would be one or the other; free by the genius and deſign of the goſpel, from all impoſition in matters belonging only to religion and conſcience; and he was for their [5] *ſtanding faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt had made them free*; not puting their underſtandings and conſciences into the keeping of other men: he

[5] Gal. v. 1.

he deſired no ſuch unreaſonable ſacrifice to be made to himſelf, far from imagining that becauſe he was appointed a *Guide* in the Chriſtian Church, any perſons were therefore obliged to ſhut their eyes that he might lead them blind-fold. His charity or moderation in religious controverſies among thoſe who agree [h] *to love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity*, was, like his prudence, *known unto all men* that knew him. He did not lay ſuch a mighty ſtreſs as is too often done, on diſputable opinions; could hope, and think, and ſpeak well of others in differing ſentiments; was always a friend to peaceable meaſures, and for none but ſcriptural terms of chriſtian communion. His faith is the fiter to be followed, becauſe it ſtood not in the wiſdom and authority of men, but in the Word of God, which he believed to be a plain and perfect rule, without any human ſupplements, under whatever name and form obtruded upon the church of chriſt; the innocence of the name, and the modeſty and humility of the pretence ſingifying very little, when the manifeſt aim is to impoſe a yoke of our own making upon the neck of the diſciples. It may be further obſerved in commendation of his faith, that it was [i] *made perfect by works*; not ſubſtituted in the room of them, which is too often done.

Rightly

[h] Eph. vi. 24. [i] Jam. ii. 22.

Rightly judging the buſineſs of his own province to be ſure enough, he invaded not that of other men; was not given to meddle where he had no call, and to paſs ſentence upon the conduct of thoſe over whom God had not made him a judge; averſe to cenſoriouſneſs and evil-ſpeaking; yet free to tell his friends, in a private and good natured manner, of any thing that he thought was not right, out of the unfeigned affection he bore them: [k] *Temperate in all things*; not lifted up with the abundance of this world's goods which God had bleſt him withal, ſo as to forget himſelf, and what he owed to the meaneſt perſons. He placed his religion in being and doing good; and, in ſhort, had, I am perſuaded, for his [l] *rejoicing, the teſtimony of conſcience, that in ſimplicity, and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, he had his converſation in the world.*

For ſome years he was engaged in Academical buſineſs, for which he was not more qualified by his acquaintance with the part he undertook, than by the eaſy and clear manner he had of communicating his knowledge, and his uncommon ſkill in conducting and managing the education of Youth. But, an alteration in his private affairs obliging him to it, he quited the office of a Tutor, to the great regret of his Collegues, who had ſo long the

[k] 1 Cor. ix. 25. [l] 2 Cor. i. 12.

the pleaſure and ſatisfaction of his converſation, and the benefit of his advice. But however he ſtill went on in the work of the miniſtry, with the reputation of a good Divine, and a uſeful Preacher, whoſe Diſcourſes were fited to do good, to inform the mind, and thereby to mend the heart; ſo that it muſt have been their own fault if his hearers were not the wiſer and the better for him. It concerns them to call to remembrance the Word of God which he hath formerly ſpoken unto them; and, if upon reflection they find they did not pay that regard to it which they ought to have done, from henceforth to give themſelves up to its guidance; foraſmuch as though Miniſters die, yet the Word of God, ſpoken by them, [m] *liveth and abideth forever.*

Of his behaviour in domeſtick life, his family are the beſt witneſſes, who, I pray God, may walk worthy of the good Inſtructions and Example he gave them, and have the loſs of ſo valuable a relation, made up to them by the comforts of God's preſence, and the abounding of his grace towards them.

It pleaſed God, towards the cloſe of his life, to take him off from publick work by the ill ſtate of his health; yet did he not, after this, ceaſe to be uſeful many ways; particularly by preaching patience, and reſignation

[m] 1 Pet. i. 23.

nation to the will of God to all about him, by his meek and chearful manner of bearing affliction. He continued to improve his own mind, when he was no longer capable of inſtructing others from the pulpit; and declared to a friend, " that reading was one of the " greateſt pleaſures of his life."

In the approaches of his end what a remarkable inſtance was he of that quietneſs and aſſurance which are [n] *the effect of righteouſneſs*, and the moſt natural concluſion of a well-ſpent life! He had been for a long time *God's waiting ſervant*, as he himſelf expreſſed it; and when the time for his diſmiſſion was come, expected it with all compoſure of mind. A friend of his, in the miniſtry, viſiting him a day or two before his death, he prayed *the bleſſing of God might be on him and his labours*; and told him, *he believed his change was near*. The other ſaying *he hoped it would be a happy change for him*; he replied, *he hoped ſo too, and did not doubt of it, through the grace of God by Jeſus Chriſt*. Such was the end of this good man, and of his converſation. That we may die his death, and our [o] *End may be peace* as his was, let us lead the ſame kind of life. Thoſe things which we have *learned, and received, and heard, and ſeen in him*, or in any other faithful followers of Chriſt, agreeable to our common rule and pat-

[n] Iſai. xxxii. 17. [o] Pſal. xxxvii. 37.

pattern, let us do, and the God of [p] *Peace ſhall be with us.*——I ſhall cloſe and enforce all by the laſt Obſervation, to which I now proceed, *viz.*

III. The abundant encouragement that chriſtians, in all ages, have to ſhew the ſame dilligence to the full aſſurance of hope unto the end; in as much as *Jeſus Chriſt is the ſame yeſterday, to day, and forever.* This is the motive made uſe of by the Writer of this Epiſtle, to ſet home his exhortation; and a very powerful one it is in itſelf, and cannot but have great weight with all thoſe that ſeriouſly conſider it. The time will not allow me to enlarge upon it, as it would well bear. *Chriſt was the ſame yeſterday*; that is, to thoſe who had already vanquiſhed in the chriſtian cauſe; is the *ſame to day*; that is, to them whom the Author of this Epiſtle would have to tread in the ſteps of their departed *Guides*, and to other chriſtians then living; and will be the *ſame forever*; that is, to his ſincere diſciples in all following ages, to the end of the world. Why ſhould we not rival the faith, and holineſs, and zeal, and conſtancy of thoſe that are gone before us, or that are advanced moſt above us, ſince we ſerve the ſame maſter; profeſs the ſame doctrine; are favoured with the ſame aſſiſtance; and have the promiſe, and expectation of the ſame reward? All theſe

[p] Phil. iv. 9.

theſe ſeem to be implied in the expreſſion, *Jeſus Chriſt the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and forever.*

1. We ſerve the ſame maſter, the ſame kind, the ſame glorious and divine maſter, who is as deſerving of the zeal and fidelity of his ſervants as ever; hath the ſame intereſt and power in heaven, and the ſame care of his people upon earth. We have the ſame pretenſions to his favour that any others have had, and may be as confident of obtaining it, if we take the right method for it; for he is no *reſpecter of perſons*, further then they have a reſpect to their duty, and the glory of God. He obſerves the utmoſt impartiality in proportioning his favour; as tenderly regards, and as readily accepts thoſe of one age, as thoſe of another; and all of the ſame age, who are followers of that which is good, as he does any; according as they love that, he loves them. There is not one among us whom he will not be as well pleaſed with as with his greateſt favourites, provided only we have the ſame title to his favour and approbation, by the uprightneſs of our behaviour, and our fervour, and chearfulneſs, and dilligence in ſerving him.

2. We profeſs the ſame doctrine. The religion of *Chriſt* is conveyed down to us uncorrupted in the writings of the *New Teſta-*

ment; ſo *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles taught*; and ſo they that were converted by them to the profeſſion of the goſpel believed. The doctrine that wrought ſuch a ſurprizing change in the world is not loſt; the firſt preachers and profeſſors of it are long ſince dead and gone, but the truth ſurvives them, and will forever ſurvive them. We know the principles they acted upon, and have the guidance of the ſame heavenly light that conducted them. Indeed the doctrine of the Goſpel was ſpoken before it was writen; but this, ſurely, can make no difference, ſince the things delivered are the very ſame, and have an equal right to challenge our attention: in this we have the advantage of the firſt diſciples, that while the Word ſpoken to them vaniſhed in ſpeaking, and they were afterwards obliged to conſult memory, not always the moſt exact, ready, and perfect regiſter of things, if they would meditate upon it, we can have recourſe as often as we pleaſe to the *ſacred writings*, and as long as we will converſe with any part of them in ſilence and retirement. As to the miracles that accompanied the firſt publication of the Goſpel, they were only intended to gain it belief as a *divine Revelation*; and therefore, when they had anſwered that end, were no longer needed; that is, when the truth was ſufficiently eſtabliſhed by them, and where the doctrine, on the ſcore of its own intrinſic evidence, the

the credit of miracles coveyed down by history and tradition, and the force of other arguments, is believed to be true; which is our case. We may say of miracles, in general, what the Apostle *Paul* saith of tongues, [q] *they are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not.* And why then should not this religion, where men have free access to the fountains of *scripture-knowledge*, bring forth the fruits it did in the begining? Nay, and that it hath done in multitudes since, who had not better opportunities for acquainting themselves with [r] *the truth as it is in Jesus*, than we have?

3. We are favoured with the same assistance; the assistance of the same *outward means and institutions*, and the same *inward grace.* We have the publick worship of God among us, the benefit of *prayer*, *preaching*, the administration of the *Sacraments*; we may go to the *House of God* every *Lord's-Day*, and, very frequently (though I must own, not so frequently as were to be wished, and as they did in the primitive times) to the *Lord's-Table.* We have religious Treatises in abundance, *Doctrinal*, *Practical*, and *Devotional*, and many of them excellent in each kind. These are very great helps. Besides which, we want not any internal influences and consolations that our own weakness, the disorderliness of our passions, and the many

q 1 Cor. xiv. 22. r Eph. iv. 21.

temptations we are compaſſed with may require, to quicken, and fortify, and encourage us in our chriſtian courſe. There is no doubt that extraordinary aſſiſtances have ſometimes been vouchſafed; but then that may be ſuppoſed to have heen only when the trials were extraordinary. This we may depend upon, that our aſſiſtances ſhall be as our neceſſities are; God will lay no burden upon us, but what he will enable us to bear; permit no temptation to befal us in the way of our duty, but what he will enable us to overcome; and expects no heights of perfection from us, but what he will enable us to attain. What he ſaid to his Apoſtle St. *Paul*, he ſaith to every ſincere chriſtian, *My grace is ſufficient for thee; for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs.* This being ſo, why ſhould we not add, as that great Apoſtle does, [f] *Moſt gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities* (as far as they are ſinleſs and unavoidable) *that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me?* The *ſame grace that wrought effectually* in the firſt chriſtians, even in the greateſt of the Apoſtles, *ſhall be mighty alſo*, though in a ſomewhat different ſenſe and manner, in the meaneſt diſciple of Chriſt, whoſe wants demand it, and who is careful not to receive it in vain. To conclude.

4. We have the promiſe and expectation of the ſame reward; the ſame for kind, if not for degree; nay, and for degree too, if the mea-

[f] 2 Cor. xii. 9.

measure of our qualification and service be equal, Does the Apostle *Paul* when he was *ready to be offered*, and *the time of his departure was at hand*, comfort himself with this, that having *fought a good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith, there was from thenceforth laid up for him a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, would give him at that day?* That we might not think this consolation peculiar to himself, he adds, *And not unto me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.* Not unto some, but unto all, that love the appearing of their Lord, so as seriously and diligently to prepare for it; for all these is a crown of glory laid up. In other races *all run*, but *one receiveth the prize*; whereas here every competitor that *runs with patience the race set before him*, is sure to conquer, and be crowned; and the prize is richly worth contending for. They that *strove for mastery* in the *Olympic Games* were obliged to exercise a great deal of patience and self-denial; and this they did to obtain a *corruptible crown*; corruptible indeed, being only a crown of leaves, of *Olive*, *Bays*, or *Laurel*; but the christian an [u] *incorruptible*. O how is it possible the Example and the Reward together should not kindle us! How can we otherwise than be provoked to faith, and love, and good works, when we think of

[t] 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8. [u] 1 Cor. ix. 24, 25.

others [w] *taking the Kingdom of Heaven*, as it were, *by force*; [x] *patiently continuing in well doing*, and at laſt received with a [y] *well done good and faithful ſervant, enter into the joy of thy Lord*; and then conſider, that the gates of the heavenly city ſtand equally open to us, that a [z] *Place is prepared* for us alſo, and manſions of bliſs and glory await us!

I ſhall conclude with thoſe words of him who is the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and forever, the firſt and the laſt, that was dead and is alive—[a] *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

[w] Mat. xi. 12. [x] Rom. ii. 7. [y] Mat. xxv. 23.
[z] John xiv. 2. [a] Rev. ii. 8, and 10.

THE EVIDENCE FOR OUR SAVIOUR'S RESURRECTION CONSIDERED:

With the IMPROVEMENT of this IMPORTANT DOCTRINE.

In Three Sermons.

1730.

PREFACE.

SOME men, by their uſage of Chriſtianity, *the very beſt* Religion *that ever was, plainly diſcover a defect of underſtanding, or more than common malignity of heart, or rather both; ſince they could not purſue it with more ſpite and ridicule, if it was as apparently falſe as it is true, and a ſcheme of doctrine as pernicious and abſurd, as it is uſeful and rational. We may juſtly aſk of thoſe who raiſe this loud outcry againſt our* Religion, *and will not be ſatisfied unleſs it be delivered up to their mercy, as its divine Author once was to the Jews,* Why what harm has it done? *Did it not put to flight armies of errors, alike injurious and reproachful to mankind, that marched under the ſtandards of* human authority, ignorance, *and* ſuperſtition; *reſtore the worſhip of the* one true God; *deliver whole nations from the worſt ſort of bondage; and, whereſoever it came, introduce a moſt happy, and ſurprizing change in the face of things? Doth it not*

not recommend every virtue that can contribute to the welfare of private perſons, or make ſocieties flouriſh? And not only by particular precepts, but in its whole frame and conſtitution, diſcountenance avarice, ambition, ſelfiſhneſs, uncharitableneſs, tyranny, and every other evil work? And for which of theſe kind, and moſt beneficial offices, is their malice ſo relentleſs againſt it? They may be ready to ſay, that it is not for a good work *that they perſecute it, but becauſe, being only* of men, *it boldly pretends to be* from God. *This indeed, is what they would have the world believe; but, however ſure they may ſeem to be of their point, let them prove* Chriſtianity *to be an impoſture before they treat it as ſuch; let them ſhew themſelves fair enemies, and not, out of a counterfeit zeal for truth, make uſe of lyes to ſupport it. This, at leaſt,* Chriſtianity *may demand from them, not only as it is the* Eſtabliſhed Religion, *but, as it is a* Religion *which they have been ſo very much obliged to, whether they will own it, or no: for if God had not, the ſecond time, ſaid,* Let there be light, *it is probable that theſe gentlemen, in ſpite of that ſuperior* Reaſon *of which they make their boaſt, had lain under the moſt deplorable ignorance of the Deity, and wanted thoſe advantages for cultivating their intellectual faculties which they now injoy. For mere ſhame, therefore, let them learn to uſe more* modera-

moderation, *and* good manners, *in their oppoſition to the* Goſpel.

Among the many proofs of their Religion *in which the followers of* Jeſus *had always triumphed,* Prophecies *and* Miracles *were two of the principal; and not without reaſon; ſince a long ſeries of predictions, delivered on ſuch different occaſions, and at ſuch diſtant periods of time, all concentering in one* Perſon; *and ſuch numerous and moſt ſtupendous works performed in places of the greateſt reſort, and equally before friends and enemies, could not but awaken the attention of the world, as we find they did, and convince them that* the Son of God was come down in the likeneſs of men. *And yet, alas, from among ourſelves have ariſen thoſe who have endeavoured, by a kind of* legerdemain *to rob us at once of the* Prophecies *of the* Old Teſtament, *and the* Miracles *of the* New, *turning them all into* allegory. *The* converſion *of the world to* Chriſtianity, *was a moſt wonderful revolution, in the manner we explain it; but if accompliſhed by* allegorical *arguments, was abundantly more ſo. Why do not they ſay that the* converſion *itſelf was not* literal, *but* allegorical?

The Reſurrection of our Saviour, *a fact ſo well fenced againſt all reaſonable objection, hath not eſcaped the cavils of theſe men. Inſtead of ſhewing wherein the main evidence, on which this article of our faith is built, is faulty or defective, they are very angry becauſe*

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the whole affair was not conducted just as they would have it, and every thing done which they fancy was expedient. Were the objections they offer real difficulties with them, which they would be glad to see cleared, and not the wretched shifts of a baffled cause, intended only to puzzle and confound the weak and injudicious, enough hath been said by several good Writers to give them satisfaction; or supposing there were some incidents in the history of this event which could not be fully accounted for, yet they would do in this case as all modest and ingenuous minds do in the question about Creation *and* Providence. *A thousand things, say they to themselves, demonstrate the* world *to be the workmanship of* God, *and under his care; therefore, the few things, that a have contrary appearance, are not to be regarded; having been designed with the same perfect wisdom as the rest, though that wisdom be less obvious and discernible. Thus here; the* Resurrection of Christ *is out of dispute, if the joint testimony of God and men can make it so; and, being thus firmly established, we ought not to be offended, though we should meet with some things in relation to it, the reasons of which we do not well understand; for this may easily be, and yet* God *have very good reasons for ordering the whole transaction in the manner he did, without taking counsel of us;* that *of the* Apostle Paul *being an everlasting truth, that* the foolishness of God *(what poor, short-sighted,*

yet

yet conceited mortals are apt to account ſo) is wiſer than men.

The argument from the Witneſſes of Chriſt's Reſurrection, *conſidered with all its circumſtances, is I think unanſwerable. And it may deſerve our notice, that in reſpect of this particular argument, the advantage is on our ſide above many, if not moſt, of the* firſt converts *to* Chriſtianity; *foraſmuch as we have the evidence more entire in the ſacred records, which ſet before us, in one view the characters of the* Apoſtles, *their labours and ſufferings, their unanimity, conſtancy, and ſucceſs, in their common cauſe; whereas, they who lived at a great diſtance from* Jeruſalem, *from whence the* Goſpel *firſt ſet out, and embraced this new* Religion, *before theſe things were conſigned to writing or authentick accounts of them could be ſpread abroad, or the* Apoſtles *had finiſhed their teſtimony; could not preſently apprehend the great force of this teſtimony, which gathered ſtrength with time. I have done all the juſtice I could to this argument in the following* Sermons; *and inlarged on ſome parts of it, which, though in my opinion very conſiderable, have not that I know of been much inſiſted on. And yet, after all, I muſt obſerve what is hinted at in the* Sermons, *that the* main *weight of this* Article *of our* Creed *does not reſt upon the* teſtimony *of the* Apoſtles, *but on the* witneſs which God bore them with ſigns and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts

gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, *which would have indubitably confirmed the doctrine of the* Reſurrection of Jeſus, *if the firſt publiſhers of it had received it only in the way of revelation, as they did other doctrines of the* Goſpel. *And therefore, if the* teſtimony *of the* Apoſtles *was not of itſelf ſufficient, yet, ſurely, ſince we have greater witneſs than theirs, even that of the* Spirit *in its miraculous gifts, and the moſt aſtoniſhing ſucceſs of our* Religion, *we have no reaſon to complain, as if we were obliged, under ſevere penalties, to believe things for which we have not anſwerable evidence.*

The knowledge of facts *being of little or no importance, but with regard to the conſequences that attend them, and the inſtructions they yield, I have therefore endeavoured to point out the ſeveral uſes of this doctrine of our* Lord's Reſurrection; *from which it will appear, that as the profeſſed deſign of the* Goſpel, *in all the parts of it, is to make men* wiſe *and* holy *and* happy, *ſo the contemplation of this glorious truth is in a particular manner admirably adapted to anſwer theſe ends.*

SER-

SERMON X.

On the Resurrection of JESUS.

LUKE XXIV. 34.

The Lord is risen indeed.

ON the day of our Saviour's Resurrection, as two of his disciples were going to a village, called *Emmaus*, and talking together of all that had lately come to pass in relation to their master, *Jesus himself drew near, and went with them*; but *their eyes were holden, that they should not know him*: by which nothing more seems to be meant, than that their sorrow had so engrossed their attention, or the appearance of their master from the dead was so entirely unexpected, that they made no observation of his person. Nor during the rest of the conversation, in which *he expounded to them from*

the ſcriptures the things concerning himſelf, as the promiſed Meſſiah, did it once enter into their thoughts, that it was he; till having accepted their invitation to ſpend the evening with them, *he was known to them in breaking of bread.* Indeed, *while he was opening the ſcriptures*, on the way, *their hearts burned within them*, as they afterwards take notice; they were ſenſible of a peculiar and divine virtue in what he ſaid, which at once enlightened and warmed them. But *when he ſat at meat with them*, the circumſtances of majeſty and tenderneſs which accompanied the action of *breaking of bread*, inimitable by any other perſon, together with a ſecret and powerful operation of his Spirit, gave the firſt awakening to their aſtoniſhed minds; and they no ſooner took the hint, and fixed their eyes a little more curiouſly upon him, but they ſaw plainly that it was their beloved Lord, with whom they had been converſing; the ſituation in which he placed himſelf, that they might have the better view of him, contributing, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, to the diſcovery.

But why, after they knew him, did he immediately *vaniſh out of their ſight*, αφαντος εγενετο απ' αυτων, ceaſe to be ſeen, by going from them? The plain reaſon of this ſeems to have been his deſigning to ſhew himſelf in a larger aſſembly that very evening, where theſe two, with the reſt of the diciples, would

would have an opportunity of ſatisfying themſelves as fully as they could wiſh. On Chriſt's leaving them, *they riſe up the ſame hour*, and *returning to Jeruſalem, find the Eleven gathered together, and thoſe that were with them, ſaying, the Lord is riſen indeed and hath appeared unto Simon.* Which words we cannot well ſuppoſe to have been ſpoken by theſe *two* Diſciples to the Apoſtles; ſince, beſides that the word λεγοντας, *ſaying*, is in the wrong caſe to be applied to them, it can hardly be imagined they would have began ſo abruptly to Chriſt's having appeared to *Simon Peter*, when there is not the leaſt mention made of it in the preceding hiſtory. Nor, on the other hand, can the words have been ſpoken by the Apoſtles to theſe *two* Diſciples; becauſe, if they had been perſuaded that *the Lord was riſen indeed* they would not afterwards, when *Jeſus came and ſtood in the midſt of them, have been affrighted, and thought that they had ſeen a ſpirit.* It remains therefore, that we conſider theſe words as uttered by them that are ſaid to have been with the *Eleven*, and who being entered but a little before, were giving them an account of what they had heard of this great occurrence, at that time the only ſubject of their diſcourſe, particularly, of Chriſt's being ſeen by *Peter*; in the midſt of which relation, the *two* Diſciples came in, and heard them ſay, that *the Lord*

was riſen indeed; after which they alſo proceed to tell the company *what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.*

Without going any further in the hiſtory, or laying the particulars of it together, as related by the ſeveral *Evangeliſts*, and reconciling the ſeeming differences that are found among them, I ſhall immediately paſs to the conſideration of the words, having firſt formed them into this following Propoſition.

It is a certain truth, and capable of the moſt ſatisfactory proof, that Jeſus, our Lord, is riſen from the dead.

In the management of this ſubject, I ſhall,

I. Lay down a few preliminary Obſervations.

II. Set the proof of our Lord's Reſurrection in the fulleſt and cleareſt light I am able.

I. The preliminary Obſervations are theſe. The Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt is a fundamental doctrine of the Goſpel—This doctrine might have ſtood firm, though it had not been ſupported by the teſtimony of eye-witneſſes, as it now is—Upon which account, the goodneſs of God is to be thankfully obſerved, and acknowledged in giving the

the world ſuch abundant evidence for this momentous article; not what is barely ſufficient, but more than enough, to convince all unprejudiced perſons—Finally, the nature of the thing atteſted is not ſuch as to render the teſtimony concerning it incredible.

1. The Reſurrection of our bleſſed Saviour is a fundamental doctrine of Chriſtianity. Take away this article, the whole frame of our religion falls to the ground. The Apoſtle *Paul* therefore takes notice to the *Corinthians*, that it was εν πρωτοις, among the firſt things which he had received, and delivered to them, [a] *that Chriſt roſe upon the third day, according to the ſcriptures.* And further on in the ſame Chapter, he ſhews them what would naturally follow from the ſuppoſition of Chriſt's not being riſen; namely that the Apoſtles were *falſe Witneſſes*, and their *preaching vain*; and as for thoſe who by their teſtimony had been perſuaded to embrace the chriſtian religion, their *faith was vain*, and they *were yet in their ſins*, in a ſtate of guilt and condemnation, for any benefit they could receive from the death of Chriſt. And therefore, if this was all they had to truſt to, they were moſt miſerable, as having no juſt and well-grounded expectations that reached beyond the preſent life.

[a] 1. Cor. xv. 4.

The importance of this doctrine is likewiſe very evidently intimated in the firſt Chapter of the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, where the *Eleven*, being upon the choice of a proper perſon to compleat their number, ſpecify this as the end or deſign of his office, ver. 22. *that he might be a witneſs with them of Chriſt's Reſurrection.* There are other neceſſary articles of the chriſtian faith, which the Apoſtles in their preaching were to inſiſt upon; but, waving all mention of theſe, the chief buſineſs of an Apoſtle is declared to be, *to witneſs the Reſurrection of their Maſter*; as much as to ſay, all the parts of the chriſtian doctrine depend on the truth of this ſingle fact; for if Chriſt roſe from the dead, it is an undeniable argument of his being really all that he gave himſelf out to be, *the anointed of God*, *the redeemer of Iſrael*, an innocent and holy perſon; that he was *the ſon of God* incarnate, and that he died to make *ſatisfaction* for the ſins of the world. On the contrary, if he did not riſe, he was a *deceiver*, and we are *deceived.* Without this article therefore our faith in Chriſt would not only be imperfect, but as mere a fiction as a caſtle in the air.

11. The doctrine of Chriſt's Reſurrection might have ſtood firm, though it had not been ſupported as it now is, by the teſtimony of eye-witneſſes. Let us ſuppoſe our Saviour had told his Diſciples that he would riſe

riſe again on the third day, and aſcend to heaven, without ſhewing himſelf to any of them after his Reſurrection; though upon this ſuppoſition they would not have had the ſatisfaction of ſeeing their Lord when riſen, nor we the ſatisfaction ariſing from their teſtimony, yet neither they nor we would have had any juſt ground to doubt of his being riſen, and aſcended up into heaven. It would have been enough that he foretold theſe things, who by his doctrine and miracles while he lived, and the prediction of his death, with ſeveral ſuch circumſtances as could not fall under human foreſight, had ſufficiently eſtabliſhed his character of a *divine meſſenger*. How could he, a man of no learning and education, have taught ſuch a doctrine, and performed ſuch works if he had not been of God? If he had not been endued with a ſupernatural knowledge of events, how was it poſſible for him to know, not only that he ſhould be put to death, but that it ſhould be at *Jeruſalem*, [b] and at that particular Paſſover to which he was then going? That one of his Diſciples ſhould betray him, pointing him out by this ſign, that it was the ſame who [c] *diped his hand with him in the diſh?* That another, *before the cock had crowed twice that night, ſhould thrice deny him?* That the chief Prieſts and Scribes ſhould *condemn him*

[b] Matt. xvi. 21. [c] xxvi. 23. [d] xx. 18, 19.

to death, and yet not execute their own ſentence, but *deliver him to the Gentiles* (i. e. to the *Romans*) *to mock and to ſcourge, and to crucify him?*

Theſe things coming to paſs exactly as foretold, were a demonſtration of *a Spirit of Prophecy* in him that foretold them; which *Spirit* aſſiſting him in predicting the time, the manner, and circumſtances of his Death, cannot, without the utmoſt abſurdity, be imagined to leave him under the power of a deluded imagination, when at the ſame time, he as expreſsly ſpoke of his Reſurrection; or ſuffer him to ſpeak of that as future, which he himſelf did not believe would ever happen. To which things, if we add the predictions of ſeveral remarkable occurrences after his Death, that theſe predictions were verefied or made good by the event, and that he appealed to them before-hand as proofs of his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, (ſuch as *the deſcent of the holy Ghoſt*, the *deſtruction of Jeruſalem*, and *the ſucceſs of the Goſpel*; if, I ſay, we add the conſideration of all this to what was before mentioned) we ſhall be forced to acknowledge, that the proof of Chriſt's Reſurrection would have been very ſatisfactory to all reaſonable perſons, even though there had been none of his acquaintance who could ſay they had ſeen him after he was riſen; and we might have

have applied to these in general what our Lord spoke on a particular occasion, [c] *I tell you before it is come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye may know that I am he.*

I take notice of this, to shew the disingenuity and groundlesness of an insinuation made by some, as if there was too much cause to suspect the truth of Christ's Resurrection from what is said, *Acts* x. 41. *That God shewed him not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before by him.* Without entering into the reasons of this conduct of divine Providence, (that is, why Christ, being risen, appeared to a select number, and not to the body of the *Jewish* people, to friends, and not to enemies,) or insisting on an observation, however just, that the opposition here intended is not properly of a few to many, or of friends to foes, but of persons qualified to give witness in this matter, having been well acquainted with Jesus, to those that were not; I shall only desire you to reflect that this is so far from justifying those who shall call in question the Resurrection of our Saviour, that if there had not been a single person, who could affirm he had conversed with Christ after his return to life again, yet (having never promised that he would be seen by any after his Resurrection, which must likewise be supposed) what went before our Saviour's Death, and what

[c] John xiii. 19.

followed, being impartially conſidered, would amount to a very plain proof of his being riſen, and aſcended to the right hand of God. Wherefore,

III. The goodneſs of God is to be thankfully obſerved and acknowledged in giving the world ſuch abundant evidence for the truth of this momentous article; being not barely ſufficient to convince all unprejudiced perſons, but more than enough to this end. Herein our gracious God hath conſulted the weakneſs of human nature, and complied with the diffidence of the human heart; hath left all thoſe without excuſe, who will not ſee what is ſo manifeſt and obvious, and provided for the fulleſt aſſurance of humble ſouls; that as the proof of this great truth is abundant, ſo their faith, and hope, and joy, might be the ſame. The Author of ſome late Papers on this ſubject, hath ſhewn, with a clearneſs of reaſoning, which approaches demonſtration, that the evidence for the truth of this fact, by which all mankind were to be influenced, and not the nation of the *Jews* only, would have been leſſened by Chriſt's appearing publickly, whether it be ſuppoſed that many of thoſe to whom he appeared, continued obſtinate in their infidelity, which is not impoſſible, or all the *Jews* with one voice had believed in him. But ſhould we grant that the evidence would have been vaſtly greater on that ſuppoſition,

as

as perhaps we muſt grant, that God in his Providence could have made it ſo, by a concurrence of extraordinary circumſtances, or by imploying ſome other means; even ſo great as to overbear the moſt ſtubborn incredulity; yet foraſmuch as the evidence vouchſafed exceeds what could have been demanded by any reaſonable perſon, and the evidence required by our modern unbelievers, muſt be ſuch as to put it out of the power of the moſt unreaſonable men to reject it, are we not obliged to acknowledge that God hath taken the way moſt agreeable to the goodneſs of an infinitely wiſe Being, and the righteous Governor of the world; who, while he condeſcends to regard the infirmities of his creatures, will not humour their pride, and leave no room for the trial and exerciſe of their virtue.

IV. The nature of the thing atteſted is not ſuch as to render the teſtimony concerning it incredible, The thing atteſted, is *the Reſurrection of Jeſus from the dead*; which would indeed be altogether incredible, were it either *impoſſible* for God to raiſe the dead; or, from the reaſon of the thing *abſurd*, to ſuppoſe that he raiſed our Saviour; or the fact, though in itſelf *poſſible*, would not admit of proof: but neither of theſe can be juſtly pretended, which leaves the teſtimony concerning this fact in its full force.

1. It

1. It is not *impoſſible* for God to raiſe the dead; they that think ſo *err*, *not knowing the ſcriptures*, *nor the power of God*; for the power of God being almighty, reaches to every thing that does not imply a contradiction; which, it is plain the Reſurrection of the Dead doth not. To raiſe a dead body, is nothing elſe but to put life into it a ſecond time. And how is this any more impoſſible or difficult, than inſpiring life into it at firſt? Was the Body reſolved into duſt, it would be only in the ſame ſtate the Body of *Adam* was in before his creation. His Body was framed out of the duſt; and, for the ſame reaſon, as his was taken from duſt which had never before been a Body; when a Body is turned into duſt, what ſhould hinder its being reſtored to its old form again? But here the Body, ſaid to be raiſed, had not *ſeen corruption*; had been in the grave but part of *three* days, and therefore ſurely was not ſo intirely ruined but that it might be fited up again by infinite wiſdom and power, and become the habitation of the Soul that formerly lived in it, and actuated it. And that which ſhews the *poſſibility* of this beyond all modeſt contradiction, is, that Chriſt himſelf had raiſed the dead, and among others one that had been dead *four* days, which was a longer time than his Body lay in the grave. So that all the witneſſes to the Reſurrection

ſurrection of the *Ruler*'s Daughter, *the Widow of Nain*'s Son, and of *Lazarus*, who were a mixed multitude, conſiſtiug of enemies as well as of friends, might be ſummoned to give an evidence, though not for the *fact* of Chriſt's Reſurrection, yet for the *poſſibility* of it. And why might not one reaſon of our Lord's not ſhewing himſelf indifferently to all the *Jews* after his Reſurrection be, that they had rendered themſelves unworthy of ſuch a condeſcenſion by the no-uſe, or even ill uſe, they made of his raiſing other dead perſons in the publick view?

2. As the Reſurrection of Jeſus is not a thing *impoſſible*, ſo neither in the reaſon of things *abſurd* to ſuppoſe. On the contrary, it is highly credible, that the Son of God being *delivered into the hands of wicked men, to be crucified and ſlain*, he ſhould take that life again which he voluntarily laid down for the ſins of the world, that hereby his own innocence might be cleared, the truth of his religion vindicated, and ſeveral other great and valuable ends anſwered. This I ſay is highly credible, ſince ſo excellent a Perſon cannot but be dear to God, and in giving teſtimony to him, by raiſing him from the dead, God at the ſame time gives teſtimony to his own truth, diſplays the greatneſs of his power, and preſents the world with a very illuſtrious and uſeful ſcene

of

of Providence; inſomuch that to aſſert the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, conſidering him as the Perſon the ſcriptures declare him to be, is to aſſert a thing altogether worthy of God. It may be objected, that God ſaw not fit to raiſe any of the *ancient Prophets*, who were perſecuted and ſlain for the truth. And why muſt *Jeſus* have this peculiar honour? The anſwer is eaſy, that the two caſes differ widely. They were only reſtorers of an old religion, *Jeſus* was the teacher of a new; a Lawgiver as well as Reformer, and to be acknowledged ſuch, not by the nation of the *Jews* only, but by all mankind. He was a Perſon in *dignity* vaſtly ſuperior to any of the ſons of men, and he was a *publick* Perſon; his *Death* being in the nature of a univerſal *Expiation*, his *Reſurrection* of a univerſal *Pledge*. And, perhaps, if we lay aſide theſe two laſt conſiderations (*viz.* the *dignity*, and *publickneſs* of our Saviour's Perſon) any other might not have been thought weighty enough to occaſion ſuch an extraordinary act of Providence, as raiſing Chriſt from the dead, *never more to ſee corruption*; which thoſe chriſtians will do well to reflect upon, who, while they believe the Reſurrection of Jeſus, eſteem him to have been a *mere man*, and his Death no more than an Example of Patience, and Conſtancy in ſuffering for the Truth.

3. The

3. The Reſurrection of Chriſt is not only a thing *poſſible*, but attended with ſuch circumſtances as to admit of the moſt undeniable proof, after the manner of other facts. The whole turns upon this ſingle queſtion, viz. *whether a perſon may not be certain of the truth and reality of things, for which he hath all the evidence that ſenſe can give him?* May not any one be ſure that he ſees and converſes with thoſe that are well known to him? That what he ſees and hears and feels, is not a deluſion? Now if this be too plain to be made a queſtion, then it is every whit as plain, that our Lord's Reſurrection was what his Diſciples might be certain of; being a matter of ſenſe, and ſubject not to the trial of one of the ſenſes only, as ſight or hearing, but of ſeveral, all agreeing in the ſame report; not for once, but at different times; not for a little while, but for the ſpace of forty days. Therefore St. *John* begins his *Firſt Epiſtle* thus, *That which was from the begining, which we have heard, which we have ſeen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life,—declare we unto you.* As St. *Luke* does the *Acts of the Apoſtles* after much the ſame manner; *The former treatiſe have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jeſus began to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the holy Ghoſt had*

had given commandments unto the Apoſtles whom he had choſen; to whom alſo he ſhewed himſelf alive after his paſſion by many infallible proofs, being ſeen of them forty days, and ſpeaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. What were theſe *many infallible proofs* to which St. *Luke* refers? Why they ſaw him face to face, had familiar diſcourſe with him, eat and drank together. That he was not an unbodied ſpectre or apparition, as they were ready to fancy, they might be convinced from the argument he himſelf made uſe of, [f] *Handle me, and ſee, for a ſpirit hath not fleſh and bones as ye ſee me have; and when he had thus ſpoken, he ſhewed them his hands and his feet.* And as they had no reaſon to queſtion whether it was a Body, and not a Spirit, that they converſed with, ſo they had as little reaſon to doubt, whether it was the Body of their crucified Maſter; ſince, beſides the print of the nails, which was viſible in his hands and his feets, they had been too long and too well acquainted with him before his Death, as well as too intimate with him after his Reſurrection, not to be able to tell, whether it was the ſame Perſon.

Thoſe whom he choſe to be witneſſes of his Reſurrection were not ſtrangers, but perſons thoroughly acquainted with him, his domeſtick ſervants, and conſtant followers; and therefore, when a Twelfth Apoſtle was to

[f] Luke xxiv. 39, 40.

to be choſen, to be a witneſs with the reſt of Chriſt's Reſurrection, that there might be no manner of exception againſt him on this account, they very prudently lay down this qualification. [z] *Wherefore of theſe men who have accompanied with us, all the time that the Lord Jeſus went in and out among us, begining from the baptiſm of John till the ſame day that he was taken up from us, muſt one be ordained to be a witneſs with us of his Reſurrection.* How could they have uſed more care to obviate all objections in this matter? This ſhews that the Apoſtles could not be deceived through ignorance, miſtaking one Perſon for another, nor thr ugh ſtrength of fancy and conceit, taking that for a real Perſon which was only the ſhadow of one, or the creature of their own brains, ſince both theſe ſuppoſitions are precluded; the former by their perfect knowledge of him, the latter by their open and near, and frequent converſe with him; which made it impoſſible they ſhould be deluded, unleſs we ſuppoſe them to be madmen, which both their writings and their conduct ſufficiently diſprove; not to add, that if they were mad, the world muſt have been ſtill madder to hearken to their frantick ſtories.*

By

[z] Acts i. 21, 22.

* What further clears the Diſciples from the charge of Enthuſiaſm, is this, that if it had been only ſtrength of

By the way, I would here obſerve the ground upon which the Apoſtles are called *choſen witneſſes*; they were not *choſen* as perſons that might be more ſafely truſted with a ſecret, and better fited to carry on an impoſture; but that the relation of this important fact, might be leſs liable to cavil, when it came from ſuch competent witneſſes; perſons that could ſpeak with the greateſt certainty, and were therefore *choſen* preferably to all others; ſo that the thing we learn from that famous paſſage, *Acts* x. 41. is the ſingular caution that was uſed in this affair, that there might be no handle miniſtered for ſuſpicion, whether they that publiſhed the Reſurrection of Chriſt, ſup-

of imagination, and weakneſs of judgment, that drew them in to think and report, that their Maſter was riſen, his Body notwithſtanding this miſtake of theirs, would have been remaining in the grave; and ſo there would have been no need for the ſoldiers being ordered to ſay, that *his Diſciples came by night, and ſtole him away.* It is plain from hence, that the Body was miſſing, whether raiſed from the dead, or conveyed away by his friends. Will the enemies of our religion join with the *Jewiſh* Council in their charge againſt the Diſciples, as having ſtolen him way? But then, who does not ſee, that the Diſciples muſt have known him not to be riſen? And therefore are not to be conſidered, and treated as weak people, under a deluſion; but as cheats and impoſtors, whoſe aim was to make the world believe what they did not believe themſelves; a ſuggeſtion which is fully anſwered under the ſecond head. On the other hand; if the Diſciples did not ſteal him away, thoſe that can are deſired to account for his being removed out of the ſepulchre, any otherwiſe than by granting his Reſurrection.

ſuppoſing them clear of an intention to deceive others, might not be deceived themſelves. When all the particulars of the evangelical hiſtory concerning this matter are laid together, and impartially conſidered, any ſuch ſuggeſtion as this will appear entirly groundleſs.——Having laid down theſe preliminary Obſervations, I now paſs on,

II. To the direct proof of our Lord's Reſurrection. And here I ſhall argue from the number of the witneſſes—their character—their ſtedfaſtneſs in the teſtimony given by them—from a compariſon of the witneſſes before, with themſelves after, the time they affirmed Chriſt to be riſen—the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon them—and finally, from the conſequence of their teſtimony; both what they might probably have expected, if they had been falſe witneſſes, and that which actually followed—By any one who ſeriouſly weighs all theſe things, I am perſuaded, the Evidence for the truth of our Saviour's Reſurrection will be acknowledged as great as the importance of it.

1. The truth of this memorable fact may be preſumed from the *number* of the witneſſes. This, at leaſt, is one good ſtep towards the proof of it. The *Twelve Apoſtles* were the principal evidence, a number ſufficient to aſcertain the fact, if no more were

to be produced. But, in the *Acts* of the *Apoſtles*, Chap. i. ver. 9, and 15. we read of *a Hundred and Twenty*, who were eye-witneſſes to the Aſcenſion of Jeſus; a privilege, that will abundantly compenſate for any ſuppoſed defect in the teſtimony of ſome of them, on account of their not having the ſame exact and full knowledge of Chriſt's Perſon as the *Apoſtles* had; for granting they had not, yet when they affirm themſelves to have ſeen a Perſon, who paſt for Jeſus Chriſt, (and, was, they had good reaſon to think from their own acquaintance with him, the very ſame) *taken up into heaven*; as we muſt allow the aſcenſion of this Perſon, aſſuming the name of Jeſus, to be a proof of his being the Perſon ſo called, ſo the teſtimony of theſe *Hundred and Twenty* concerning Chriſt's Aſcenſion may, and ought to be regarded as equally ſtrong for his Reſurrection, which is preſuppoſed by the former. We can go yet further; for St. *Paul* tells us that [h] *Chriſt was ſeen by above Five Hundred Brethren at once*; and that *the greater part of them were alive at that time, though ſome of them were fallen aſleep.* Now this Apoſtle was too wiſe, not to ſay too good a man, to have affirmed this, if it had not been true, becauſe it had been a very eaſy thing to have diſproved him. He could not have had the face to have told the *Corinthians*, who were chriſtians, (and ſo

[h] 1 Cor. xv. 6.

ſo muſt know, or have opportunities of knowing, if he ſpoke truth) that the greater part of *Five Hundred* perſons, then living, vouched the Reſurrection of Chriſt, and publickly declared that they had ſeen him, if indeed there had been no more than the *Twelve Apoſtles*, and a few others, that ſtood forth as witneſſes of this fact. He could not expect to be believed in this caſe on his bare Word; and therefore had more ſenſe than to appeal to witneſſes that were not in being; ſince the *Corinthians* had nothing to do but to call for their names, and the place of their abode, and there had been an end of his confidence, and his argument, together.

We may therefore reſt ſatisfied that at the time of St. *Paul*'s writing his Firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, (which is ſuppoſed to have been about the year of our Lord *Fifty-Seven*; that is, not much more than twenty years after his death) there were ſome hundreds of witneſſes, either true or falſe, of Chriſt's Reſurrection. And that they were not falſe, but true witneſſes, may, with a high degree of probability, be infered from their *number*. For, firſt, it can hardly be thought that ſo many would agree in a *known* falſehood, from which they had no advantage to hope for; I ſay, in a *known* falſehood, it being next to impoſſible that in a matter of fact, and ſo circumſtantiated as that was, they ſhould be deceived; for which reaſon, if Chriſt was not riſen,

his Reſurrection muſt be a fable of their own contriving. And how unlikely is it that ſo many ſhould conſpire together to tell a moſt ſolemn lye, out of pure love to it, or merely for lyeing-ſake?

Again, the greater the *number*, the greater muſt be the difficulty of preſerving a harmony and conſent among them; and where the *number* is ſo conſiderable, as in the preſent caſe, and the harmony ſo entire, their agreement is too remarkable for any reaſonable man to ſuppoſe it could proceed from any thing elſe but truth, which is naturally attended with conſiſtency and uniformity, while a lye as naturally begets an inconſiſtent variety. That which finiſhes this argument from the *number* of the witneſſes is, that if the Reſurrection of Jeſus had been a fabulous ſtory, they who invented it, and were the head managers of the cheat, would not have admited ſo great a *number* into the ſecret, becauſe the likelihood of keeping the ſecret would be proportionably leſs, as the *number* intruſted with it was greater. In a forgery the more there are who know it, ſo much the more danger is there of its being diſcovered. The perſons that made up the confederacy would have been jealous of each other (as brethren in iniquity are wont to be, when a pardon with a reward is offered to him that ſhall convict the reſt) and, out of fear they ſhould be betrayed, would have been tempted

tempted to be the firſt to betray. The *Apoſtles* could not but know this and have reflected, that of the *Twelve*, which was their *number*, one, out of a principle of avarice, was a traitor; and therefore in caſe, when they attempted to convert the world to the belief of their Maſter's Reſurrection, they had known it to be a falſity, they would never have engaged *Five Hundred* in the ſame plot, but contenting themſelves with a ſmall *number* for witneſſes, (to the end they might be more ſafe from detection) would have endeavoured to draw in others upon the credit of their report. No other account then can be given of ſuch a *number* of witneſſes than that they were conſcious to their own integrity, and were real, not counterfeit witneſſes of what they affirm; this is the argument from the *number* of the witneſſes.

II. I ſhall now conſider their *character*, which will be found to add mighty weight to their teſtimony. They were men of great *honeſty* and *ſimplicity*—As *honeſt* men, they could not deſign ſuch a notorious cheat, as this of impoſing the belief of Chriſt's Reſurrection upon the world muſt have been, if the fact was not true; as men of uncommon *plainneſs* and *ſimplicity*, they would not have been able to do this, if they had deſigned and endeavoured it.

1. They were men of *an honeſt character*, and as ſuch could not deſign ſuch a

notorious cheat as this of impoſeing the belief of Chriſt's Reſurrection upon the world would have been, if the fact was only pretended. Their character in this regard was ſo well eſtabliſhed, and their behaviour ſo irreproachable and inoffenſive, that we do not hear their bittereſt enemies objecting any thing to their *moral* conduct. The reaſon is, that they have no handle for it. They have been ſometimes repreſented as a company of fools, or wimſical perſons, as men under a deluſion, but not as *vitious* and *immoral*. Their *writings* may be appealed to for a proof of the contrary, in which there are all the marks of a genuine virtue and piety, of the moſt generous charity to mankind, and the moſt upright intentions that *writings* can carry in them. So may the *credit* they met with in the world; ſince, if their converſation had not been fair and unblameable, free from all appearance of a ſenſual diſpoſition, and of low and treacherous deſigns, they could never have found ſo good a reception among the moſt virtuous, and have made ſo many converts, among others, to practical godlineſs, and a heavenly life; beſides which, they had no gain to make, no intereſt to ſerve by a fraud, (as ſhall afterwards be ſhewn) which cuning deſigning men, who at bottom have nothing of goodneſs in them, never fail of propoſing. There is therefore very good reaſon,

reaſon, why we ſhould let them paſs for *honeſt* men. Upon which I proceed to argue thus.

If they were *honeſt men*, they were certainly *credible witneſſes*; for they appeal in the moſt ſolemn manner to the righteous and omniſcient God, for the truth of what they ſay, which none but men far advanced in wickedneſs would have done, knowing it to be falſe; they deliver their teſtimony in the name of God, and vouch his authority for the doctrine they taught; profeſſing themſelves to have received it from heaven, and aſſerting the Reſurrection of their Maſter, as well as pretending to work miracles by the finger of God, in confirmation of it. This, I ſay, is what men of *common honeſty* would not have done, ſuppoſing they knew it to be all a fiction; becauſe, as the Apoſtle *Paul* expreſſes it, [i] *if Chriſt was not riſen, they were found falſe witneſſes of God, having teſtifyed of God that he raiſed up Chriſt, whom he raiſed not up.* But beſides this impiety towards God, in affixing his tremendous name to a known untruth, they muſt have been ſome of the worſt of men on another account; I mean, in endeavouring to delude the world, when that deluſion muſt be ſo fatal to them. They could not but be aware of the ruin it would bring on great numbers of thoſe who

[i] 1 Cor. xv. 15.

ſhould embrace their cauſe; foreſeeing which they would become chargeable with all this miſchief, and muſt be pronounced void of all humanity, in direct oppoſition to the notion which their doctrine and their lives would give one of them. But now, if there be no foundation for ſuch hard thoughts of the firſt Preachers of Chriſtianity, as if they were deſtitute of all regard to God or men, we muſt confeſs there is none for calling in queſtion their teſtimony concerning the Reſurrection of Jeſus.

2. They appear to have been men of uncommon *plainneſs* and *ſimplicity*; ſo that if they had been minded to put a cheat on the world, they were not fited for ſuch an adventure. They had been obſcurely educated, were ignorent of the arts of leading a multitude, and of managing the paſſions of men, ſo as thereby to caſt a cloud before their underſtandings. Nay, they do not ſeem to have received from *nature* any gifts for this purpoſe. They did not abound in that craft which is required to the carrying on a publick impoſture; (if we may gueſs by the plainneſs of their outſide, their artleſs manner of converſing with the world, and the ſpirit of ſimplicity that reings in all they have writen) or they abound in it to ſuch a degree, as under an appearance of openneſs, which is not to be ſeen through, by the moſt ſagacious obſerver, to conceal the

the greateſt cuning and reſerve that ever was. But if the Apoſtles and firſt Preachers of Chriſt's Reſurrection were ſuch very cuning men, why had they not ſhewn it in dreſſing up another ſort of fable, which would have been more pleaſing to the world, and more beneficial to themſelves? At leaſt, ſuch cuning men would never have embarked in ſo deſperate a deſign, and embroiled themſelves in ſo many difficulties and dangers, as, in the ſequel, will appear to have attended the preaching of a crucified and a riſen Jeſus. The ſum is, that the *character* of the witneſſes, as *honeſt* and *plain* men, renders their teſtimony altogether credible.

III. It is a great acceſſion to the ſtrength of this argument, that they were ſo *ſteady* and *unſhaken* in their teſtimony; were never known to flinch from the cauſe they were engaged in, and to deny what they had once affirmed; that they were not diſcouraged by all the inconveniences and hardſhips they went through, which were not a few; were in nothing terrified by the threats of their adverſaries, nor to be ſilenced by any thing but death; not by the fear, not by the pain of it, but by death itſelf, which at the ſame time that it cut off their teſtimony, compleated the evidence of it. To what can we attribute this *conſtancy* and *perſeverance*, but to an inward conſciouſneſs that they ſuffered for the truth? And

that

that, ſuffering for this, they ſhould be amply rewarded in another, and better world? It is with this view that St. *Paul* in proving his Apoſtleſhip, alledges his ſufferings as a very good argument of it. [k] *Are they miniſters of Chriſt? I am more; in labours more abundant, in ſtripes above meaſure, in priſons more frequent, in deaths oft; of the* Jews *five times received I forty ſtripes but one; thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I ſtoned, thrice I ſuffered ſhipwrack, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderneſs, in perils in the ſea, in perils among falſe brethren, in wearineſs and painfulneſs, in watchings often, in hunger and thirſt, in faſtings often, in cold and nakedneſs.* By all which he inſinuates, that the *falſe Apoſtles* would not be content to ſuffer after this manner. Whereas, not only St. *Paul*, but all the *true Apoſtles* of our Lord were called forth to the moſt fiery trials; which makes this Apoſtle ſay concerning himſelf and the reſt of his brethren. [l] *I think that God hath ſet forth us the Apoſtles laſt, as it were appointed unto death; for we are made a ſpectacle to the world, to angels and to men. Even unto this preſent hour, we hunger, and thirſt, and are naked, and are*

[k] 2 Cor. xi. 23,—28. [l] 1 Cor. iv. 9,—13.

are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place, &c. *We are the filth of the world, and the off-ſcouring of all things unto this day.* They were characterized by their boldneſs in danger, and their patience in tribulation; inſomuch that inſtead of ceaſing to ſpeak in the name of Jeſus, as their enemies by the cruelſt uſage endeavoured to make them do, it was matter of rejoicing to them that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame and reproach, and death for his name.

This firm adherence of ſo many perſons to the cauſe of Chriſt, their brave contempt of pain and poverty, of hunger and nakedneſs, of impriſonment and death, (evils ſo much dreaded by the generality of mankind) would have been very ſtrange, if it had been only for their *belief* that they had ſuffered ſuch things, and a probable argument that the Spirit of Chriſt animated and aſſiſted them in an extraordinary manner. But to this a plauſible anſwer might have been returned, by inſtanceing in thoſe who under the power of deluſion have ſhewn the greateſt fearleſneſs of mind, and borne up againſt torments and death with an invincible courage and reſolution. Whereas, the argument from the *conſtancy* of the *Apoſtles* in ſuffering, will not admit of any ſuch evaſion; for it being a *matter of fact* that

that they teſtified, (not a bare perſuaſion or opinion, to which they adhered) namely, that chriſt was riſen, and that they had ſeen, and converſed with him after his Reſurrection, they could not poſſibly be deluded, (as was proved before) but muſt know what they affirmed to be true, or falſe. If they knew it to be true, we have what we are arguing for. If it be ſaid, that they knew it to be falſe, the anſwer is eaſy, that it is altogether incredible that ſuch *numbers* would be ſo obſtinate in the defence of a known falſehood, that no terrors would affright them, no flatteries or offers would bribe them, but they ſhould continue in the ſame ſtory, when they had nothing to get by it, and for the ſake of it muſt quit all that is valuable in this life; not to mention the hazard they would run of plunging themſelves into greater miſeries after death. Such a conduct as this is ſo prodigiouſly abſurd and fooliſh, that we can never imagine any man in his ſober ſenſes, and much leſs ſo many men (having all the appearance too of conſiderate perſons) to be guilty of it. Upon this account we are to diſtinguiſh between the ſufferings of the witneſſes to Chriſt's Reſurrection, and of thoſe who received it on their teſtimony. For though the patience and ſtedfaſtneſs of theſe latter may be improved as an argument

ment of their being in earneſt perſuaded of the truth of Chriſt's Reſurrection, and of the *Apoſtles* being competent and credible witneſſes of a thing which they would otherwiſe have been hardly able to bring the world to the belief of; as likewiſe that the *Apoſtles* were more than pretenders to a power of working miracles; nay, though to one who conſiders the matter all round, ſuch numerous Examples of the nobleſt fortitude are indications of a ſuper-natural power and aſſiſtance; yet it muſt be owned, that they do not ſo immediately evince the truth of this particular fact, as theirs who openly appeared and ſuffered, as eye-witneſſes, of our Saviour's Reſurrection; which(I repeat it) they would never have done, without being aſſured of the truth of it. Being aſſured of this, they had not only the ſupport of a good conſcience, but of a future, moſt glorious recompence, which made them triumph over all the malice of the world, and rejoice in the immortality of their cauſe, as their own.

IV. Let us compare the witneſſes *before* with themſelves *after*, the time they affirmed Chriſt to be riſen; and we ſhall be convinced by the remarkable change of their notions and temper, and conduct, that their Lord was riſen from the dead as they ſaid.

This

This part of the argument having been little conſidered, I ſhall be the larger upon it, and endeavour to ſhew the force of it in ſeveral inſtances.——But of this in the next Diſcourſe.

SERMON XI.

On the Resurrection of JESUS.

LUKE XXIV. 34.

The Lord is risen indeed.

IN the preceding Discourse I observed, that these words might be formed into this Proposition.

It is a certain truth, and capable of the most satisfactory proof, that Jesus, our Lord, is risen from the dead.

In the management of this subject, I proposed,

I. To lay down a few prelimanary Observations.

1. The Resurrection of our blessed Saviour is a fundamental doctrine of Christianity.

II. The doctrine of Christ's Resurrection might have stood firm, though it had not been

been ſupported, as it now is, by the teſtimony of eye-witneſſes.

III. The goodneſs of God is to be thankfully obſerved and acknowledged in giving the world ſuch abundant evidence for the truth of this momentous article; being not barely ſufficient to convince all unprejudiced perſons, but more than enough to this end.

IV. The nature of the thing atteſted is not ſuch as to render the teſtimony concerning it incredible.

Having laid down theſe preliminary Obſervations, I paſſed on,

II. To the direct proof of our Lord's Reſurrection.

I. The truth of this memorable fact may be preſumed from the *number* of the witneſſes.

II. If we conſider their *character* it will be found to add mighty weight to their teſtimony.

III. It is a great acceſſion to the ſtrength of this argument, that they were ſo *ſteady* and *unſhaken* in their teſtimony.

I now proceed,

IV. To compare the witneſſes *before*, with themſelves *after*, the time they affirmed Chriſt to be riſen; and we ſhall be convinced by the remarkable change in their notions, and temper,

per, and conduct, that their Lord was risen from the dead as they said. This part of the argument having been little considered, I shall be the larger upon it, and endeavour to shew the force of it in several instances.

1. They were once ignorant and unapprehensive; as indeed might well enough be expected from the meanness of their birth, and breeding, and the nature of their occupations, being many of them poor fishermen. Their Master reproaches them with the dulness of their understanding in matters that did not require any great reach to apprehend; and, which is more, they themselves have in their [a] history recorded instances of this, though so little to their own honour. This is the true character of the first Publishers of Christianity. And whence then (to ask the same question concerning them which was once asked concerning their Master) had these men so much learning, having never learned, as afterwards to preach the most excellent doctrine that ever was; a doctrine so rational, so divine, so every way worthy of God, and suited to the better part of man, his soul, and to the necessities of his condition, as a fallen creature, that nothing like it is to be found in the writings of the Philosophers? And yet these latter were all their days used to study and speculation, while

[a] Mat. xv. 16. Mark vii. 18.

the former from mending their nets were called to be *fiſhers of men*; and, without any preparation after the uſual methods, ſurprized the world, till then buried in darkneſs, with the heavenly light of their doctrine.

Theſe [b] *Galileans*, as their enemies called them in contempt, theſe men of low and groveling thoughts, taught their hearers a religion that excelled any which they or others had ever before known; and which makes the thing more extraordinary, a religion very different from that which they had been brought up in; for to any one that ſhall compare the *Jewiſh* and the *Chriſtian* Religions together, how low and carnal will the precepts of the one appear, how ſpiritual and exalted thoſe of the other! And when they have been trained up in ſuch groſs and ſecular notions, without the advantage of a liberal education to enlarge and brighten their faculties; when, notwithſtanding the inſtructions they received from their Maſter, they were ſo little improved during his life, how comes it to paſs that ſome time after they are cured of their ignorance and their prejudices together, and ſhew themſelves to be more learned in the ſcience of Salvation, than men of the fineſt parts, and moſt generous education? Does not this prove that their knowledge came by *Inſpiration*; and that this *Inſpiration* was after the time of Chriſt's Reſurrection, according to their

[b] Acts ii. 7.

their account of it, and therefore a moſt glorious demonſtration of his being riſen? They were *taught of God*, and *ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt*; the whole frame of the Chriſtian Religion proclaims it: it was after they became witneſſes of our Lord's Reſurrection, that they were thus *inſpired*, thus divinely taught; from which it is natural to conclude that they were true witneſſes, ſince it is contrary to all Reaſon to ſuppoſe that God ſhould enable men to publiſh a heavenly doctrine, in conjunction with, and with an expreſs deſign to confirm a falſe teſtimony.

2. Once they were unbelieving, afterwards fully convinced of what they before doubted of; or at leaſt pretended to be ſo convinced, at a time when they could have no inducement to make ſhew of ſuch a conviction, if it was not real. The Reſurrection of Chriſt was ſo far from their thoughts, that when he took them aſide, and told them very particularly what ſhould happen to him, that [c] *he ſhould be put to death*; *and that on the third day he ſhould riſe again*; *they underſtood none of theſe things: and this ſaying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were ſpoken.* And the prediction of Chriſt's Reſurrection was not more unintelligible to them at this time, than his Reſurrection itſelf was incredible to them afterwards; they were as

[c] Luke xviii. 33, 34.

backward to receive the one as the other. Their hopes of Jeſus being the Meſſiah, ſeemed to have expired when he died. *The women prepared ſpices for the embalming his body*, which they would not have done, had they expected his Reſurrection; the account which theſe women gave of his Reſurrection was entertained as an idle ſtory; the *Two Diſciples* travelling to *Emmaus*, own *they truſted it had been he that ſhould redeem Iſrael*; as much as to ſay, their truſt now failed them. When he ſtood in the midſt of the *Eleven*, and the reſt that were aſſembled with them, they were ſo far from believing him riſen, or from a diſpoſition to believe it, as to fancy that they ſaw a Spirit; nay, *Thomas* who did not happen to be preſent when Jeſus firſt appeared to them, would not believe till he had ſeen *in his hand the print of the nails*, and was invited *to put his finger into the print of the nails, and to thruſt his hand into his ſide.* All this, inſtead of favouring of credulity, is rather an indication of a contrary extreme.

And to what then ſhall we attribute this ſudden change in the behaviour of Chriſt's Diſciples? That they, who at firſt were ſo backward to believe his Reſurrection, ſhould ſoon after boldly appear as witneſſes of it? To what can we attribute this, but to their being entirely ſatisfied, by ſeeing and converſing with their Lord, that he was indeed riſen from the Dead? To ſay, they made a ſhew

of

of being ſatisfied when they were not, is abſurd; becauſe they could have no temptation to do this, and muſt have very ſtrong reaſons not to do it. To ſee men at firſt ſo incredulous, and after this ſuch firm witneſſes to the truth of a fact they themſelves eſteemed incredible, as to venture their lives in defence of their teſtimony, is enough to convince any one of their ſincerity, who is not an utter ſtranger to this virtue himſelf. Which makes me wonder that a late Author ſhould urge it as an objection againſt our Saviour, 'that many of his Diſciples 'thought he could not be the Meſſiah when 'they ſaw him ſuffer, notwithſtanding his 'miracles, and frequent declarations to them 'that he was the Meſſiah.' Whereas, from this prejudice, and diffidence of the Diſciples on the account of their Maſter's ſufferings, which were not very reconcileable with their idea of *Meſſiah the Conqueror*, it is natural to argue in a quite contrary way from this wretched Infidel, and to infer the truth of our Lord's Reſurrection; of which, if the Diſciples had not had very good proof, having been ſo ſcandalized at his ſufferings, notwithſtanding the evidence of his miracles, they would never have declared themſelves perſuaded of it, when, by this declaration, and an endeavour to convert mankind to the ſame faith, they ſhould draw ſuch a ſtorm upon themſelves from all quarters.

3. Once they were timorous and poor ſpirited. As well as they loved their Maſter, they had not the courage to ſtand by him when he was apprehended; not even he who was naturally the moſt fearleſs and reſolved of the number, and engaged to die with him, rather than he would deny him. They all fled when they ſaw him in the hands of his enemies, and as for him that promiſed moſt, he did worſe than forſake him, he diſowned all knowledge of him. Should it be ſuggeſted that there is *an inconſiſtency* in the character of this Apoſtle, who, in defiance of a multitude that came out againſt Jeſus, bravely drew his ſword in his quarrel, and yet preſently after cowardly denies him; not to anſwer, that this ſtart of courage might proceed from a ſudden paſſion which his Maſter's danger had awakened in him, it is a ſufficient reply, that when St. *Peter* thus expoſed himſelf for his Maſter, he thought, or hoped, he would have exerted that divine power which he had ſo often ſeen to attend him, in delivering himſelf and followers, and confounding his enemies. But when, contrary to his expectation, Jeſus quietly ſurrendered himſelf into the hands of thoſe who ſought his life, his reſolution fails him at once; and, remembering what he had done to the high prieſt's

ſer-

ſervant, he is more afraid than any of his fellow-diſciples.*

This ſhews that our Saviour knew very well what was in man, and particularly, in his Diſciples, when he tells them, [d] *all ye ſhall be offended becauſe of me this night; for it is written, I will ſmite the Shepherd, and the ſheep ſhall be ſcattered abroad.* Yet behold theſe very perſons, as if they were not the ſame men, not long after acting a nobler part, and diſcovering quite another ſpirit! They are as fearleſs as before they were fearful, contemn dangers and death, as much as they before appeared to dread them! And when was it that they aſſumed this courage? At a time when one would have thought they ſhould have been quite diſpirited; and would have been ſo, if they had not been ſupported by a ſupernatural fortitude. It was after their

* The Traitor-Diſciple ſeems to have acted upon the ſame view; perſuading himſelf that Jeſus would make his eſcape from thoſe to whom he betrayed him, by which means he ſhould gratify his covetouſneſs at the ſmall expence, as he thought, of a miracle wrought by his Maſter; for *when he ſaw that he was condemned; he repented himſelf, and brought again the thirty pieces of ſilver to the chief prieſts and elders, ſaying, I have ſined in that I have betrayed innocent blood. And he went and hanged himſelf.* Mat. xxvii. 3,—5. Which at once takes off all ſuſpicion of the Diſciple knowing his Maſter not to be the man he paſſed for, in that he would not otherwiſe have been guilty of ſuch a piece of horrid treachery.

[d] Mat. xxvi. 21.

Master was taken from them that they made appear the greatest zeal and forwardness, and the most undaunted resolution in his cause. And how perfectly unaccountable would this have been, that whom they were afraid to own while he was yet living, and might have freed himself from the power of his persecutors, they should openly confess, when his enemies had gluted their rage upon him? This, I say, must be perfectly unaccountable upon any other supposition but that of his Resurrection. For indeed, if he conquered death, and thereby proved himself superior to the malice of men ad devils, they had no cause to shun any hazards, and evils, how great soever, for his sake. He could save them from the mouth of the the lion, and would do it, if he saw it necessary; or, at worst, would reward them with a glorious Resurrection. When we consider the Apostle *Peter*, who upon a slight accusation of a maid-servant saying, *This is one of them*, denied his Master; and when others repeated the same charge, proceeded so far as to bind his denial with oaths and curses; when we consider him, with the greatest presence of mind, addressing the *Jews* and charging them home with their guilt in crucifying the [e] *Lord of glory*, what can we think but that this extraordinary courage had as extraordinary a cause; and was derived from his Saviour, who was once dead, but now risen,

[e] Acts ii. 23.

riſen, never to die more? It was the Reſurrection of Chriſt that gave them all this aſſurance, and made them triumph over the fears of death, as their Lord had done over death itſelf.

Before I leave this head, I would point out a remarkable place of ſcripture, which equally belongs to two or three of the particulars before mentioned. [f] *Now when they ſaw the boldneſs of Peter and John*, and *perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled, and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jeſus.* You have here ſome of the proofs of our Saviour's Reſurrection, before inſiſted upon, briefly ſuggeſted; ſuch as the boldneſs and courage of the witneſſes in giving their teſtimony, which, conſidering their former character, was very obſervable—their diſcourſing in a manner that could be little expected from them, not having been bred to learning—and laſtly, that they were competent witneſſes of our Lord's Reſurrection, having been among his intimate acquaintance; *and they took notice that they had been with Jeſus*; they could not therefore be deceived, and take another perſon for Chriſt.

4. They were once led away with the vulgar prejudices of their nation, which expected a *temporal Meſſiah*, tho' meanly born; they were aſpiring and ambitious, ſet upon worldly power

[f] Acts iv. 13.

power and greatneſs, and dreamed of nothing but titles and places under their Maſter. [g] *There was a ſtriſe among them who ſhould be greateſt.* Two of them, another time, with their mother, ſued for a grant from him that [h] *one might ſit on his right hand, and the other on his left in his kingdom.* Theſe falſe ideas with which their heads were filled, made them unwilling to hear of his ſufferings, becauſe they did not know how to make them agree with their notions of a worldly kingdom. Even after his Reſurrection, they were not immediately delivered from theſe flattering and viſionary hopes. So much ſeems to be implied in that queſtion, [i] *Lord, wilt thou at this time reſtore again the kingdom unto Iſrael?* This being the ſtate and poſture of their minds, the change afterwards wrought in their temper and notions might juſtly occaſion our wonder, did we not regard it as the operation of that *Divine Spirit*, which, after the Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of Chriſt, was poured out upon them, whereby their minds were illuminated, their notions and their reliſh of things ſpiritualized, and they had a perfectly new ſet of ideas raiſed in them. Now, inſtead of earthly power, and riches, and grandeur, they recommend thoſe of a very different nature, ſuch as faith alone can apprehend, and ſuch as ſuit none but a kingdom that is not of this world; they promiſe no other,

g Luke xxii. 24. h Mat. xx. 22. i Acts i. 6.

other, they themſelves covet no other; they are humbled and mortified, and make it their buſineſs to inculcate theſe virtues on others. There is nothing that reliſhes of pride and vain-glory, and the love of the world, in their preaching or in their lives; from whence we learn, that their ſentiments of things were very much altered; as, upon enquiry into the reaſons of this alteration, we ſhall be able to reſolve it into nothing elſe but the Reſurrection, and Exaltation of their Lord, which, together with the *Spirit* imparted to them, gave them another view of things, made them ſee their former miſtakes, and qualified them to be the Diſciples and Miniſters of a crucified Jeſus, and, by the ways of meekneſs and poverty of ſpirit, to prepare both themſelves and others for future glory. We may add, as nearly connected with this particular,

5. That whereas before the death of Chriſt, and for ſome time after, the *Apoſtles* had much the ſame narrow partial conceptions of Almighty God, *as the God of the Jews only, and not of the Gentiles*, which others of that nation had; by degrees, their minds and hearts are ſo enlarged, that they are willing all men ſhould be admited upon the ſame foot of acceptance in the ſight of God with themſelves. They are taught no longer to call thoſe perſons *common* or *unclean*, whom God had *cleanſed*, as he had done the forbiden

biden kinds of food, by taking off his prohibition from them; and confess, that they now perceive, [k] *God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him.* Yea, they [l] *glorify God who had to the Gentiles also granted repentance unto life.*

The Gospel they preached abounds with precepts of the most sublime and extensive charity, a charity of which they themselves were most admirable examples, aiming at the salvation of all mankind, and shuning no dangers, grudging no pains and labour, by which they might bring them to love God, their Saviour, and one another. Now, whatever they may think who are strangers to the history and character of the *Jews*, such a revolution as this in the sentiments of men, possessed from their birth with high ideas of their being the favourites of heaven, and sowered with the ill usage they had met with from their conquerors, will appear not a little surprizing to all proper judges of it. When we see them quiting the higher ground, or rather, without quiting it, lending others their helping hand to raise them as high as themselves, and making their veneration for *Moses* stoop to their regard for a Person who was lately put to death in the most infamous manner; and when we consider that this change happened after the death of Christ, who in the

[k] Acts x. 15,—34. [l] xi. 18.

the courſe of his miniſtry had given frequent hints of a new covenant or religion which God was about to eſtabliſh, in the bleſſings and privileges of which all that believed in his name would be equally intereſted; and had told them, [m] *he had many things to ſay to them, which they could not then bear*; whoſe want of zeal for ceremonial inſtitutions, and the peculiar cuſtoms of that nation, which he ſet no value upon in compariſon of *moral duties*, was, they likewiſe knew, one principal article of the crimes laid to his charge by his enemies, on which they condemned him to death; when we put theſe things together, no other account will be thought ſo probable, of the change mentioned, as that given us by themſelves, *viz.* that *God having raiſed up Jeſus*, and *in his name ſent the gift of the Holy Ghoſt upon the Gentiles* as well as on the *Jews*, they would not *withſtand God*, who, by this ſign, had plainly declared his good-will towards all the children of men. For this conſult the *Hiſtory of the Acts of the Apoſtles*, particularly in the *Chapters* before cited.——Upon the whole then, this compariſon of the witneſſes of Chriſt's Reſurrection with themſelves does very much ſtrengthen their teſtimony, ſince we find ſuch differences in the ſame men, as can no otherwiſe be accounted

[m] John xvi. 12.

ed for than by ſuppoſing the truth of what they affirmed.

v. The deſcent of the *Holy Ghoſt* at *Pentecoſt*, is a further proof of the Reſurrection of Jeſus. This he himſelf before his Death had frequently encouraged them to expect; ſee particularly, *John* xv. 26. *When the Comforter is come, whom I will ſend unto you from the Father he ſhall teſtify of me. And ye alſo ſhall be my witneſſes, becauſe ye have been with me from the begining.* And ſo, after his Reſurrection, *Acts* i. 8. *Ye ſhall receive power, after that the Holy Ghoſt is come upon you: and ye ſhall be witneſſes unto me, both in Jeruſalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermoſt part of the earth.* Here is then a double teſtimony to be conſidered; one of the *Holy Ghoſt*, the other of the *Apoſtles*; and one deſigned to ſupport, and corroborate the other; the *Holy Ghoſt* teſtifying of Chriſt by thoſe extraordinary gifts beſtowed on the firſt Preachers of Chriſtianity, whereby the *Apoſtles* and their fellow-labourers in the Goſpel were aſſiſted in a moſt effectual manner to witneſs to their Saviour with whom they had been from the begining of his miniſtry. This effuſion of the *Spirit* was not till after Chriſt's Aſcenſion, but at once gives evidence to that, and to his Reſurrection too; [n] *This Jeſus hath*

[n] Acts ii. 32, 33.

hath God raiſed up, whereof we are all witneſſes; and being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, he hath ſhed forth this which ye now ſee and hear. And ſo again, • *The God of our fathers raiſed up Jeſus, whom ye ſlew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour; for to give repentance unto Iſrael, and forgiveneſs of ſins. And we are his witneſſes of theſe things; and ſo alſo is the Holy Ghoſt, whom God hath given to them that obey him.*

Here you ſee the teſtimony of the *Spirit* is repreſented as conſpiring with that of the *Apoſtles* to the Reſurrection of Jeſus. The effect of this effuſion of the *Spirit* was, that the perſons on whom it fell were endowed with ſeveral miraculous gifts, among which was the gift of *languages*; and the *Apoſtles* not barely with a more eminent degree of theſe gifts than other chriſtians, but with a power of communicating them *by the laying on of their hands.* *Acts* viii. 18. The gift of *languages* was not only a miracle, but a moſt uſeful miracle; being intended to fit the *Apoſtles* to preach the Goſpel to all mankind, for whoſe benefit it was equally deſigned: from whence by the way we learn, both the extenſive *nature* and *deſign* of the Chriſtian Religion; and the

• Acts v. 30,—32.

the *end* of Spiritual Gifts, that they are for uſe, and not for oſtentation. It is only as a miracle that we now conſider it; and a moſt evident miracle it was, undiſputed by thoſe who were then preſent, when the event came to paſs, and were the beſt judges. And if it be aſked, how we ſhall be ſure that the matter of fact was as it is here related? The anſwer is eaſy, that had it not been a thing well known, and at that time, and in that place, not doubted of, the writer of this hiſtory would not have fixed the time and place as he hath done; at *Jeruſalem* the chief city of the *Jews*, and at *the feaſt of Pentecoſt*, when vaſt numbers of *Jews* came up out of the neighbouring countries to worſhip at the temple; and further, at that *particular* feſtival which next enſued after the death of Chriſt; a fact ſo aſcertained might have been eaſily diſproved, if the relation had been falſe. It is true when the *Apoſtles* were diſperſed into diſtant countries, where they propagated the Chriſtian Faith, their ſpeaking in the *language* of the country where they ſojourned was not, to men who were ſtrangers to their perſons, any argument of the truth of the facts they related, and the doctrines they taught, (becauſe they could not be aſſured of their not having learned theſe *languages* in the ordinary way) without firſt receiving a well atteſted account of what had lately paſt at *Jeruſa-*

Jeruſalem. Nor could their character, where they were not perſonally known, nor their number, or their exact uniformity and conſtancy in delivering the facts and doctrines of Chriſtianity, preſently gain them any credit; becauſe theſe things could not be immediately known to thoſe who were acquainted only with a ſingle Apoſtle, by whoſe miniſtry they were converted; of whom, and his doctrine, they could therefore no otherwiſe make a judgment, but from the things which they themſelves ſaw and heard. This made it neceſſary that they ſhould produce ſome other extraordinary proof; which accordingly they did, performing many wonderful works, and confering divers miraculous gifts on the Churches which they had planted in Cities of the greateſt note. Beſides the ſatisfaction which theſe gifts afforded to the perſons immediately concerned, they are a very good argument to us at this diſtance, who in the Epiſtles writen to thoſe Churches, find theſe gifts of the Holy Ghoſt appealed, or refered to, as very common things, and univerſally acknowledged; which we muſt therefore grant them to have been, unleſs we can ſuppoſe the Writers of theſe Epiſtles to have been the moſt ſhameleſs and abandoned of men, to talk of things as well-known to perſons who knew nothing of them; and withal the moſt indiſcreet

and unthinking, to put their own reputation and that of their cauſe on a great number of men's allowing that to be true, which they knew to be falſe; eſpecially when there were thoſe who made it their buſineſs to undermine the Apoſtles authority among the perſons appealed to; as was the caſe, in the Churches of *Corinth* and *Galatia*, with regard to the Apoſtle *Paul*.

VI. The conſequence, or ſucceſs of their teſtimony is to be conſidered, both that which they might *probably* have expected, in caſe they had been falſe witneſſes, and that which *actually* followed. The moſt probable conſequence, and that which they had all the reaſon in the world to expect, if it had been a falſity that they reported, was that they ſhould find no manner of credit. The actual conſequence was the converſion of the world to the Chriſtian Faith; which as they would not have had the leaſt reaſon to hope for, had not the Reſurrection of Chriſt been an undoubted matter of fact, ſo it does undeniably prove the fact of our Lord's Reſurrection.

1. The moſt probable conſequence of the teſtimony of the Apoſtles, and that which they had all the reaſon in the world to expect, if it had been a falſity that they reported, was that they ſhould find no manner of credit; or whatever ſucceſs they might have for a little time, among a few weak

weak people, and such as were fond of novelties, the forgery would soon be detected, their followers fall off from them, and they and their cause be thenceforward mentioned only with contempt. This was the best they could look for, barely to be despised and neglected. It was not likely they should escape without much worse treatment, when they had to do with such an implacable sort of men as the *Jews* were, and preached in the hated name of a Person whom they had crucified. They might be sure that if let alone at first out of contempt, as soon as they should have gathered any thing of a number, and their sect should threaten to prevail, they should be persecuted with the most unrelenting rage, and quickly be destroyed. They could not but be acquainted with the fate of *Theudas* and *Judas of Galilee*, of whom we read, *Acts* v. 36, 37. *Before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody, to whom a great number of men, about four hundred joined themselves, who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered and brought to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him; he also perished, and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.* The Apostles could not be ignorant of this, since St. *Luke*, who wrote the history in which this affair is mentioned, was one of their particular

friends. And as they muſt know the unhappy end of theſe impoſtors, ſo it muſt be great folly in them to flatter themſelves that they ſhould have any other; and much greater if, expecting no better, they would yet engage in ſo hopeleſs an enterprize,

They could not have the ſame temptation to try their fortune that thoſe other counterfeits had, inaſmuch as they ſet up for themſelves, the Apoſtles for another man; they declared for a temporal power, or, at leaſt, for liberty, and ſo might hope for a favourable reception among thoſe who were weary of the *Roman* yoke, and big with the expectation of a triumphant Meſſiah. The Apoſtles had no proſpect of obtaining a welcome, either among Jews or Gentiles for the doctrine of a crucified Saviour, which was that they propoſed to the world. Should it be ſaid, that upon this very account they were leſs likely to incur the diſpleaſure of the *Romans*, who would not trouble themſelves about a dead man, and an inviſible King, (for what danger could there be to the government, if his followers thought Jeſus a King, ſince he was removed far enough out of the way?) I anſwer, that at leaſt the malice of their own countrymen would be the greater againſt them, were it for nothing elſe than that the fame of this *falſe* Meſſiah, as they eſteemed him, would help to divert the expectation of the

true;

true; and that out of hatred to the chriſtian cauſe, they would not fail to repreſent the followers as they had done their Maſter before them, as enemies to *Cæſar*; reſtleſs and unſatisfied till they had accompliſhed their deſtruction, as they had done his. Beſides, that the *Romans* were too jealous, both of their eſtabliſhed government, and their eſtabliſhed religion, not to look with an evil eye upon any growing ſect, and to take timely care to ſuppreſs it: not to add, that though he whom they called their King was not living, yet they were, and under pretence of drawing men in to advance his ſpiritual kingdom, might ſtir them up to do a great deal of miſchief. When their views were thus unpromiſing, they muſt have wanted common underſtanding to attempt the ſpreading a falſe ſtory, which they muſt foreſee would be but ſhort-lived.

2. Having conſidered the probable conſequence of this teſtimony, if it had been falſe, let us now enquire what was actually the conſequence of it; *viz.* the converſion of the world, of men of all religions, of all ranks and denominations, learned and unlearned, to the Chriſtian Faith; an effect not only extremely improbable, had Chriſtianity been founded in a lye, but morally impoſſible. *Gamaliel*'s advice and reaſoning was very juſt; [p] *And now I ſay unto you, refrain*

[p] Acts v. 38, 39.

from theſe men, and let them alone; for if this counſel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, leſt haply ye be found to fight againſt God. And very certain it is, that ſuch a ſect would ſoon have dwindled to nothing, as circumſtances then were, without truth to ſupport it, and a heavenly protection to guard and defend it. *Daniel*, in his prophecy, deſcribing the kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, gives the characters of it, and the time when it ſhould commence; [q] *And in the days of thoſe kings*, (i. e. after the *Babylonian*, and the *Medo-Perſian* monarchies were deſtroyed; and the *Gaecian* was ſplit into ſeveral leſſer principalities, ſignified by the *toes* in *Nebuchadnezzar*'s *image*) *ſhall the God of Heaven ſet up a kingdom which ſhall never be deſtroyed*, (which he did under the *fourth* and *laſt*, or *Roman* monarchy) *and the kingdom ſhall not be left to other people, but it ſhall break in pieces and conſume all thoſe kingdoms, and it ſhall ſtand for ever.* In which words it appears that this *kingdom of God*, or *of heaven* (as the goſpel-ſtate is often called) was to be known by two properties, its *univerſality*, and its *everlaſting duration.* And accordingly within a few years after our Lord's Reſurrection, it grew to be of a very great extent; as we believe, when the fulneſs of time pointed out by prophecies is come, it ſhall

[q] Dan. ii. 44.

ſhall be properly univerſal, and *the ſtone cut out of the mountain without hands* ſhall overthrow all adverſe religions and intereſts, and *fill the whole earth.*

The progreſs of Chriſtianity was amazing. Converts came flying from all parts, [r] *as a cloud, and as doves to their windows*; which may help us to underſtand what is meant when it is ſaid, that [s] *with great power the Apoſtles gave witneſs of the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt.* The meaning is, that their preaching was attended with wonderful ſucceſs; the religion of Chriſt ſpread its conqueſts on all ſides; which it could not have done, if, beſides the power of truth, an inviſible hand from heaven had not effectually wrought with it. A ſingle Sermon of St. *Peter*'s was the means of converting three thouſand ſouls, and another two thouſand. Within twenty-five years after the death of Chriſt, the number of believing *Jews*, at *Jeruſalem* only, amounted to many myriads, and theſe too, ſuch as were *zealous of the Law*, and ſo had no ſmall difficulties to overcome before they could turn chriſtians [t]. Some of our Saviour's Parables alluded to this ſurpriſing ſucceſs of the Goſpel; particularly the Parable of the grain of muſtard-ſeed; [u] *The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of muſtard-ſeed, which a man took and*

[r] Iſai. lx. 8.
[s] Acts iv. 33.
[t] Acts xxi. 20.
[u] Mat. xiii. 31, 32.

sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree; so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Thus did Christ fulfil his promise, that [w] *when lifted up, he would draw all men after him.*

And what was the time imployed in making these conquests? The rapidity or swiftness of them is almost incredible, and therefore very fitly compared to lightning; [x] *As the lightening that lightneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth to the other part under heaven, so shall also the son of man be in his day.* Before the destruction of *Jerusalem*, which was less than forty years from the crucifiction of our Saviour, the Gospel was to be published [y] *among all nations*; and was so among the nations or countries subject to the *Roman* Empire. Some of the earliest Fathers of the Church enumerate several people and countries in *Asia*, *Africa*, and *Europe*, the only quarters of the world then known, among whom the Gospel was received, some of them exceeding remote from *Jerusalem*, from whence it first set out, and unconquered by the *Romans*. Such was the reception which the report of Christ's Resurrection met with in the world; an event so astonishing, if we consider

[w] John xii. 31. [x] Luke xvii. 24.
[y] Mark xiii. 10.

conſider a few of its circumſtances, as to prove, beyond all contradiction, the truth of our Saviour's Reſurrection, and the divinity of his Religion. I ſhall briefly inſtance in ſome.

1. The oppoſition which the Goſpel encountered and overcame. All parties were confederated againſt it, though upon different motives. Their common quarrel was its declaring war againſt all other religions, with which it did not allow of any agreement or compoſition. *Judaiſm* itſelf, the only true religion before, was to be aboliſhed, and yield to the Goſpel as a more perfect diſpenſation. And as for the idolatrous religions of the world, it gave them no quarter. They were not indeed to be deſtroyed by force, as the abominations of the *Canaanites* were. The Apoſtles and firſt chriſtians were not to take the ſame method the *Iſraelites* did, who are commanded at their entrance into *Canaan*, to deſtroy where-ever they came [z] *the altars of the falſe gods, to break their images, and to cut down their groves.* But the falſe gods were not to be admited into a partnerſhip with the true, nor the true God to be worſhiped by images; both the gods and their images, with all the idle and impious ceremonies belonging to their worſhip, were to be diſcarded by all that embraced Chriſtianity; theſe being the

[z] Exod. xxxiv. 13.

the only terms on which they could be liſted in the number of Chriſt's Diſciples.

The princes and politicians of the world would be ſure to oppoſe this new Religion from maxims of ſtate, and becauſe of the dangerous conſequence of innovations in theſe matters. Hence all nations, *Greeks*, *Romans*, and even the moſt barbarous people, have by publick Laws made it a very high crime to affront and undermine the Religion of the country. Concerning the *Athenians* and the *Romans* it is obſerved, * that care was taken by them to prevent any one's introducing a new Religion. Therefore *Socrates* was condemned at *Athens*, and the *Chaldeans* and *Jews* were expelled the city of *Rome*. Such was the zeal of the *Athenians* in this reſpect, (as *Joſephus* relates it) that they who uttered a word concerning the gods, not agreeable to the received laws, were to be puniſhed without any mercy. The *Romans* uſed a like ſeverity, and *Mecænas*'s advice to *Auguſtus* upon this head is remarkable, being to this ſenſe, " that he ſhould himſelf worſhip the " gods according to the laws of the coun- " try, and oblige others to do the ſame; " that he ſhould puniſh the authors of " foreign religions, and this not only for " the ſake of the gods, whom whoever " contemns, he will hardly be reſtrained by " any

* *Witſii Ægyptiac.*

" any thing elſe ; but becauſe they who in-
" troduce new deities will draw away great
" numbers to the uſe of foreign laws ; from
" whence conſpiracies, aſſemblies, and cabals
" will follow, things not at all conſiſtent
" with the honour and ſafety of a monar-
" chy." Upon theſe and ſuch like reaſons of policy, idolatrous princes had no kindneſs for a Religion which threatened the overthrow of all thoſe that were eſtabliſhed, and expreſsly aimed at their deſtruction ; which was the main root of all thoſe cruel perſecutions raiſed againſt the Chriſtian Church, under heathen Emperors.

The *Prieſts* would not be ſo ungrateful as to deſert the gods, at whoſe altars they had ſerved, and been fed, and to whom they were endebted for their unmeaſurable wealth, and great authority among the people. And the *People*, beſides the influence of their Princes and Prieſts upon them, were held faſt by ſuperſtition, and a blind veneration for ancient cuſtoms, from which, they had been made to believe, they could not depart without the greateſt impiety towards heaven, and arraigning the wiſdom of their Parents and Anceſtors. And though the philoſophical and more thinking part of the world ſecretly deſpiſed the eſtabliſhed ſuperſtitions, yet they too joined in runing down Chriſtianity upon another ſcore, having no reliſh for its doctrines, which did not

not at all agree with their preconceived notions, and high thoughts of themſelves; nor for its ſimple and unartificial manner of inſtruction, without making uſe of any ſtudied methods, any formal rules, and long trains of reaſoning, or any embelliſhments of rhetorick and eloquence. So that the *power* and the *wiſdom* of the world, the various *paſſions* and *intereſts* of men, perſons of every *condition* and *ſize of underſtanding*, were all united againſt the Goſpel; which yet baffled all this oppoſition, and proved victorious over the joint force of earth and hell; the reaſon of which could be no other than this, that *heaven* was on its ſide, and in fighting againſt Chriſtianity, men fought againſt God.

2. What were the means imployed in propagating Chriſtianity? The moſt unlikely to human apprehenſion that can be conceived. They were not *wiſe men after the fleſh*, or *mighty*, or *noble* that were called to preach the Goſpel of Chriſt, and to be witneſſes of his Reſurrection. But God was pleaſed to chuſe *the fooliſh things of the world to confound the wiſe, the weak things of the world to confound the things that were mighty; baſe things of the world, and things that were deſpiſed, did God chuſe; yea, and things that were not, to bring to nought things that were; that* it might appear that the *fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than men, and the weakneſs*

neſs of God ſtronger than men. The inſtruments were contemptible, but the power that wielded them was omnipotent, and the wiſdom divine. Men of no extraction, no education, no fame for parts and learning, no power, no intereſt, no ſway, unſkilled in the arts of perſuaſion, unarmed with force or policy, theſe were the men ſingled out for this work. They were ſent as ſheep among wolves. Naked and defenſeleſs, (or furniſhed with no other weapon but truth, and no other armour but that of innocence) they entered the liſt againſt the whole world; yea, and againſt principalities and powers, and ſpiritual wickedneſſes in high places; and in the iſſue appeared to be more than a match for them, to the end, *the excellency of the power might be of God, and not of men.* But there is another hinderance behind. * They were not only *mean men*, but they were *Jews*, of a nation at once deſpiſed and hated by other people, and for ſeting up a Religion that ſubverted the Religion of their fathers more hated by their fellow *Jews* than they were by neighbouring nations. To this add,

3. The conſideration of the Religion propagated by them, and the fact on which they founded it. The fact was of one Jeſus, who was dead, but by the Apoſtles affirmed to be alive again; a ſtory ſo little fited

* Biſhop *Chandler* in his firſt *Defence*.

fited to gain belief, that when St. *Paul* diſcourſed concerning it at *Athens*, the *Epicureans* and the *Stoicks* encountered him, aſking, [a] *What will this babler ſay?* While to others *he ſeemed to be a ſetter forth of ſtrange Gods, becauſe he preached unto them Jeſus and the Reſurrection.* The Religion founded upon this ſtrange fact conſiſted of doctrines and precepts no way ſuited to the guſt of the world; ſuch as theſe, that ſalvation is to be obtained no other way than by the righteouſneſs of a humble ſuffering crucified Jeſus; that there is but One God, and he a pure Spirit; that the only acceptable way of worſhiping this holy and inviſible God is by a pure heart, and ſpiritual and elevated affections; that to pleaſe God we muſt deny ourſelves, crucify the fleſh, oppoſe the torrent of worldly cuſtom and example, forgive our enemies, and practiſe the moſt divine and difficult virtues; that for all this men were to have no other reward in this world but the teſtimony of their own conſciences, joined with that of the Spirit of God; and, in the next, none but ſuch a one as the ſenſual, the covetous, the earthly-minded would be ready to account rather a puniſhment than a reward. This was the Religion, to the doctrines and rules of which the Apoſtles of Chriſt required an abſolute ſubmiſſion; a Religion that

[a] Acts xvii. 18.

that demanded a great deal, and for the preſent promiſed nothing; which notwithſtanding, their teſtimony was believed, their offers were accepted, and their injunctions complied with by great multitudes. Once more,

4. The Time and Place, when and where theſe things were tranſacted compleat the argument. It was upon the very ſpot which had been the ſcene of our Saviour's miracles and ſufferings, among thoſe who wanted not *will* to have detected the cheat, if there had been any, nor *ability* neither; when it was but ſo little while before, that the things in queſtion were reported to have happened. It was further in a very knowing age and part of the world that Chriſtianity was firſt preached and firſt eſtabliſhed. The firſt converts to the Goſpel were not made among Barbarians, among rude and ignorant people, who were capable of being caught by the groſſeſt impoſtures, but where the arts and ſciences had their abode, and in *Rome* itſelf, the center of human learning, among wiſe and inquiſitive perſons, who would not eaſily ſwallow a palpable falſehood. It was at the very time that the heathen Oracles loſt their credit, and fell into general neglect. Now whether it be ſuppoſed that theſe Oracles were given out by lyeing Spirits who were ſilenced at this time; or by the craft of the Prieſts, who,

who, now the world was grown wiſer, could find no vent for thoſe pious frauds which paſt well enough in the times of ignorance; whether one or the other of theſe be ſuppoſed, the ceſſation of Oracles renders the ſucceſs of the Goſpel at the ſame time and in the ſame places, much more remarkable.

I might ſhew the great diſparity in all theſe reſpects between *Chriſtianity* and the *Mahometan Impoſture*, which was firſt ſet on foot in an age of darkneſs, and among a moſt ignorant ſort of people; was propagated by the ſword, † and in its ſcheme of doctrines was accommodated to the carnal luſts and fancies of men. But contenting myſelf to have juſt mentioned this, I paſs on to the Uſe which may be made of this important truth. And there are ſeveral Reflexions which do naturally ariſe from it, for Information, Comfort, and Inſtruction in holineſs.——But of this in another Diſcourſe.

† *Abu-Obeidah*, was patient, meek and religious, ſaith the Hiſtorian; *Caled* couragious and enterprizing; and it was for this reaſon that the former was diſplaced from his command over the forces that were to plant the religion of *Mahomet* in *Syria*, to make room for the latter. *Ockley's* hiſtory of the *Saracens*. Had Mahometiſm had no other champions than men of *Abu-Obeidah*'s character, well meaning, but not warlike, that abſurd religion would have been extinguiſhed as ſoon as it appeared.

SERMON XII.

On the Resurrection of JESUS.

LUKE XXIV. 34.

The Lord is risen indeed.

THESE words I have observed may be formed into this Proposition.

It is a certain truth, and capable of the most satisfactory proof, that Jesus, our Lord, is risen from the dead.

In the management of this subject I proposed,

I. To lay down a few preliminary Observations.

1. The Resurrection of our blessed Saviour is a fundamental doctrine of Christianity.

11. The doctrine of Christ's Resurrection might have stood firm, though it had not

been ſupported, as it now is, by the teſtimony of eye-witneſſes.

III. The goodneſs of God is to be thankfully obſerved and acknowledged, in giving the world ſuch abundant evidence for the truth of this momentous article; being not barely ſufficient to convince all unprejudiced perſons, but more than enough to this end.

IV. The nature of the thing atteſted is not ſuch as to render the teſtimony concerning it incredible.

Having laid down theſe preliminary Obſervations, I paſſed on,

II. To the direct proof of our Lord's Reſurrection.

I. The truth of this memorable fact may be preſumed from the *number* of the witneſſes.

II. If we conſider their *character*, it will be found to add mighty weight to their teſtimony.

III. It is a great acceſſion to the ſtrength of this argument, that they were ſo *ſteady* and *unſhaken* in their teſtimony.

IV. If we compare the witneſſes *before* with themſelves *after*, the time they affirmed Chriſt to be riſen, and we ſhall be convinced by the remarkable change in their notions,

tions, and temper, and conduct, that their Lord was risen from the dead as they said.

v. The descent of the *Holy Ghost* at *Penticost* is a further proof of the Resurrection of Jesus.

VI. The consequence or success of their testimony is to be considered; both that which they might *probably* have expected, in case they had been false witnesses, and that which *actually* followed.

Having in the two preceding Discourses considered these things, I now come to the *Use* which may be made of this important truth. And there are several Reflections which do naturally arise from it, for Information, Comfort and Instruction.

1. Is it a most certain truth, *that Christ is risen from the dead?* And is the proof now given of it satisfactory, as I persuade myself it is? We know then what we are to judge of Christ, and his Gospel. We know that our Religion is divine, and the Author of it from God, and with God. We may be confident that we have not followed *cunningly devised fables* in believing the truth of that Religion which we have been brought up in, and of the several doctrines that constitute the frame of it. We may be sure that these are not fables, because the Resurrection of Christ, upon which his Religion depends, is no fable. The two last of the arguments made use of, prove the truth of the Christian Religion immediately;

the reſt do more immediately prove the Reſurrection of Chriſt, and as a neceſſary conſequence of that, the divine authority of his doctrine. For ſurely God would not have honoured an impoſtor, and added credit to his wicked deſigns, ſo far as to raiſe him from the dead. And therefore, as St. *Paul* argues, [a] *He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the ſpirit of holineſs, by the Reſurrection from the dead.* And if he himſelf was the Son of God, his Goſpel is to be received not as the Word of men, but as the Word of God. A true Prophet could never teach a falſe doctrine; he that was proclaimed *the beloved Son of God, in whom he is well pleaſed*, and to whom we are commanded to hearken, could never deliver any other things than what he had received of the Father. Let us therefore hear and reverence him as a Divine Teacher, and Law-giver. Chriſtianity is the true Religion; we know it to be ſo, becauſe Chriſt, the Author of it, and from whom it hath its name, is riſen from the dead. Let us entertain, and treat it as true; which we ſhall never do, unleſs we make it the conſtant rule of our Faith and Practice. By aſking, in a doubting ſceptical manner—*how can theſe things be*—when they are plainly a part of the Goſpel Revelation; or by a carnal temper, and a wicked ungodly courſe of life, we pro-

[a] Rom. i. 4.

proclaim our Religion to be falſe, or act as if it were ſo; let us be perſuaded to be more conſiſtent with ourſelves, and with the Religion we profeſs, and *carry the name of Chriſt writen*, as it were, *on our foreheads.* A chriſtian life, as it is an open declaration of our faith, is moſt likely to eſtabliſh others in the ſame, while by a verbal acknowledgment of the truth, and feigned zeal for it, unattended with a ſuitable converſation, we ſhall be ſo far from ſerving the intereſt of truth, as to do it a great deal of prejudice.

11. *Is Chriſt riſen indeed?* Then is the offence of the croſs ceaſed. I mean all reaſonable offence againſt it. No man can have any juſt cauſe to be offended with Chriſt, at the meanneſs and poverty of his life, or even the ignominious circumſtances of his Death. Theſe things are ſhocking to the firſt thoughts and reflections of our minds, that one who takes the name of the *Saviour of the world*, ſhould be delivered unto Death, and ſuffer in the quality of a malefactor. But, if the whole ſcene be conſidered under one view, there is nothing in it to diſpleaſe; the ill impreſſions made by the Death of Chriſt on the beholder, are all taken off by his Reſurrection; nay, and the Death of Chriſt hath a quite contrary effect, and challenges our love and eſteem as much as, ſeparate from his Reſurrection, it would have been apt to provoke our diſguſt. *Chriſt crucified, was*

to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness. But let us examine a little whether they had any foundation for their prejudices; or any but what his Resurrection ought to have entirely removed. Was Jesus *crucified through weakness?* Say, he was so; yet *he liveth by the power of God.* Was he delivered into the hands of wicked men? Arraigned, condemned, and put to death as a blasphemer of the law, and a deceiver of the people? Whom men condemned, God justified, by raising him from the dead. Was he that promised immortality conquered by Death? It is owned he was; but in his turn he was conqueror, and *loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible he should be holden of it*; he *made his grave with the wicked*, but left it as the *Son of God.* Did he set like the sun under an eclipse? He rose like the sun in its full glory. His Death could not diminish him more than his Resurrection aggrandized and exalted him. Behold *Daniel* a servant of the living God, (as if his God was not able to save him from being made a sacrifice by the worshipers of idols) cast into the lions den; and a stone laid upon the mouth of the den, *sealed with the king's own signet, and with the signet of his lords!* But stay a little; censure not *Daniel* as wanting true piety; or his God as wanting power or goodness. Behold him coming out of the den unhurt by the lions, whose mouth the angel

angel of God had ſhut, foraſmuch as innocency was found before him in this holy man. This is a very proper illuſtration of the Reſurrection of our great Redeemer, whoſe enemies, to make his ſepulchre ſure, ſealed the ſtone that was rolled to the door of it, and ſet a watch; but all in vain. As if he had recovered new ſtrength by his ſleep in the duſt, he emerges from the grave with redoubled vigour, and becomes immortal. If therefore, the croſs of Chriſt be *fooliſhneſs* to any, it may be to ſuch as are not themſelves very *wiſe*.

III. *Is Chriſt riſen indeed?* We may then infer the *compleatneſs* of the Satisfaction made by his Death; that he was not only an *innocent* Perſon, but a *ſacrifice of a ſweet ſmell, the Lamb of God that taketh away the ſin of the world*. His Death was not of a *martyr* only, like that of other good men, who die for their Religion; he died as a *publick victim*, and gave *his life a ranſom for many*; ſo he himſelf foretold he would; and by riſing, as he likewiſe foretold, made it viſible to the whole world that the ranſom was accepted. It is for this reaſon, that the Apoſtle, having aſked, *who is he that condemneth?* And anſwered in part, *it is Chriſt that died*, adds further, *yea, rather that is riſen again, who is even at the right hand of God making interceſſion for us*. Had his life been taken from him as from the ſacrifices under the law,

and never reſtored to him again, it had been an argument that his blood was no more capable of taking away ſin, than the blood of bulls and of goats; his ſacrifice had been as imperfect as any of the legal ſacrifices, or rather his Death had been no ſacrifice at all: but now the acceptableneſs of his Sufferings, the merit of his Death, the all-ſufficiency of his Mediation can no longer be doubted of; God publickly declares all this, by raiſing him from the dead.

It ſeems to be on this account that the Reſurrection of our bleſſed Saviour, which is ſometimes attributed to himſelf, (to denote the greatneſs of his power, and that he hath *life in himſelf*; John ii. 19. *Deſtroy this temple*, meaning the temple of his body, *and in three days I will raiſe it up again)* is at other times, and moſt generally, ſpoken of as the effect of the will and power of God his Father; [b] *Him hath God raiſed up.* [c] *Whom God hath raiſed up from the dead.* [d] *Chriſt was raiſed from the dead by the glory* (i. e. by the power or ſpirit) *of the Father*; to ſignify that the juſtice of God was fully ſatisfied, and the honour of his broken law vindicated, that he approved the obedience of his Death, and was now reconciled to an apoſtate world, not imputing their iniquities to any that repent and believe. So that here you ſee the ground of our juſtification by

[b] Acts ii. 24. [c] iii. 15. [d] Rom. vi. 4.

by Christ; [e] *He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.* [f] *We are justified by his blood,* because he was justified by his Resurrection; to which I conceive that expression of his, being [g] *justified in the spirit*, refers. And I am the more confirmed in that sense of the phrase, by comparing it with what is said, *Rom.* i. 4. that *he was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the Resurrection from the dead.* In this view how reviving is the meditation of Christ's Resurrection to believing humble souls! If I belong to Christ, if united to him by faith and love, if conformed to his image, if obedient to his laws; I am absolved in him, his discharge is mine, and I am as certain of my being pardoned, as I am that Christ is risen.

IV. *Is Christ risen indeed?* Then he is indeed ascended up into heaven, is sat down at the right hand of God, there to make intercession for us, and to exercise universal empire, and dominion, and from thence he will come to judge both the quick and the dead. All these things are necessarily connected with his Resurrection. He did not rise to live here upon earth; the earth was to be only the scene of his humiliation, which was finished at his Death. We may truly say, that the world, having treated him so ungratefully, was not *worthy of him*; besides which, it was not

[e] Rom. iv. 25. [f] v. 9. [g] 1 Tim. iii. 16.

not fit or reaſonable that he ſhould be any longer detained from his reward. For which reaſon, after he had ſpent a little time with his Diſciples, by his preſence and converſation, to prepare and animate them for their undertaking, and given them ſome inſtructions concerning the kingdom of God, he returns to his Father, and is inveſted with that glory *which he had with him before the world was.* His entrance into heaven was both as a Conqueror, and a Prieſt. In his paſſage through the interjacent regions *he led captivity captive*, and openly made a ſhew of thoſe principalities and powers whom he had ſpoiled on the croſs. He overcame Death, and him that had the power of Death, and having vanquiſhed them by his Death and Reſurrection, led them, as it were, in triumph at his Aſcenſion.

It was further, as our *High-Prieſt*, that he made his entrance into the [h] *holy place*; that as the High-Prieſt, once a year, went into the holy of holies, with the names of the children of *Iſrael*, and the blood of the ſacrifice, which he ſprinkled on the mercy-ſeat, ſo our Jeſus might *appear in the preſence of God for us*, as our *advocate*, obtaining the forgiveneſs of our ſins in his blood; as our *mediator*, offering up our prayers as incenſe before the throne; and as our *fore-runner*, preparing manſions of glory for us.

We

[h] Heb. iv. 14.

We are further to consider our Redeemer as possessed of universal empire and dominion. He is therefore said to be *the first born from the dead*, and to be *begoten* on the day that he was raised, according to the prophecy in the *second Psalm*, compared with *Heb.* i. 5. Then was the *decree* declared, or published, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begoten thee; ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.* Then he was solemnly invested with the *regalia*, and took the reins of government; the *Angels* were commanded *to worship him* as their Lord, and all power was put into his hands, both *in heaven*, his imperial city, where he reigns with the *Father*, and *on earth*, the affairs of which he directs for the advantage and happiness of *his body the church.* Christ was *first* born in a poor and low condition, and to a life of sorrow and suffering; his *second* birth was to honour, and immortality, and a kingdom that ruleth over all; and, in respect of both these, his *first* and *second* birth, he is in scripture styled *the Son of God.* It is true, when he was born in *Bethlehem of Judea, wise men came from the east to Jerusalem, saying, where is he that is born King of the Jews?* But though the title did belong to him then, it is certain he took not possession of the kingdom, or not in so eminent a manner as after his Resurrection, when he be-

became *King of Nations*, as well as *King of the Jews*, and of Angels, as well as of Men.

The *natales*, or birth-days, of the *Roman Emperors* signified not only their *natural* birth-days, but likewise their *civil*, or the time of their inauguration to the empire; this was called *natalis imperii*, in distinction from the other, which was called *natalis genuinus*. When *Constantine* is said by ancient writers to have been born in *Britain*, there are learned men who understand this of his imperial, not of his natural birth-day; his natural birth, as they prove, being at *Naisus* in *Dacia*. The day of our Saviour's Resurrection was *natalis imperii*, on which he received his investiture into that sovereignty, which he merited by his Sufferings and Death. *Phil.* ii. 6,—11. There is a double *Lordship* of Christ, one of *authority*, like that of kings over their subjects; the other of *property*, like that which men have in things which they have bought, or do any other way rightfully possess: both these are refered to, *Rom.* xiv. 7, 8, 9. *None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether therefore we live or die, we are the Lord's: for to this end Christ both died and rose and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.* We are to own the *authority* of Christ by living

to

to him, by making his laws the rule of our actions, and in all things prefering his will to our own. We are to own his abſolute *right* and *propriety* in us, by ſubmiting to his diſpoſal, both in life and in death, by living to his *glory*, and dying at his *call*, and if need be, for his *name*; for [1] *we are not our own, but his, who died for us, and roſe again.* It is the privilege of the faithful, and ſo eſteemed by them, that Chriſt is their Lord in both theſe reſpects. They cannot be governed by a better ſyſtem of laws than thoſe of the Redeemer, nor have their lives and all their intereſts lodged in better hands. Of all commited to him by the Father, and who commit themſelves to him, none ſhall be loſt; he will watch over them with the tendereſt care, protect them from the rage of their enemies, order their circumſtances, both ſpiritual and temporal, for their good, and finally receive them to himſelf, becauſe they are his.

I am aware, this ſort of kingly power will not at all pleaſe ſome men, who are as much offended with the Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of Chriſt, as with his Croſs. In the eyes of the *Jews*, all dominion, or deliverance, that is not temporal, appears trifling and deſpicable; there is nothing ſubſtantial, or real in it. And there is a certain Author, who, to judge of him by his manner of writing, is

[1] 2 Cor. v. 15.

is neither *Heathen*, *Jew*, nor *Chriſtian*, and yet every one of them as ſerves his occaſion, that talks after the ſame manner. As if the ſupreme command over the viſible and inviſible worlds, becauſe not *viſibly* adminiſtered, did not expreſs ſomething more grand, than to be the deliverer of a handful of people, and the inſtrument of their ambition and revenge. But if nothing but a *viſible* glory will ſtrike theſe men; if no ſalvation muſt paſs for real, that is not *ſenſible*; and the deſtruction of enemies be ſuch a neceſſary and deſirable mark of power, let them wait a while longer, and they ſhall have the ſatisfaction they demand, if they will ſo account it.

For as ſurely as Chriſt is riſen (and nothing can well be more ſure than this) we know, that [k] *he will come to judge the world in righteouſneſs, whereof God hath given aſſurance to all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.* Then ſhall we ſee that our Redeemer liveth, whom we now believe to be riſen on the teſtimony of his Diſciples; our eyes ſhall behold him, and not another's. But a few were eye-witneſſes of his Reſurrection; when he cometh *in the clouds of heaven, every eye ſhall ſee him, and they alſo that pierced him*, or have ungratefully denied, and ſpitefully inſulted him. Glorious, and terrible advent! Long wiſhed for by

[k] Acts xvii. 31.

by ſome; by others as much dreaded, or derided! See, he comes! The *grave* could detain him no longer than three days; and the *heavens* can do it only till the *reſtitution* or conſummation *of all things, ſpoken by the holy Prophets, ſince the world began*; he comes *to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not his goſpel*, and to be *glorified in his ſaints*. They who will not hear the Apoſtles, proving that Chriſt is riſen, and ſealing the truth with their blood; they that laugh at the followers of Jeſus for their credulity, and, like the *philoſophical wits* of *Athens*, mock when they are told of his Reſurrection; what will theſe men ſay, which way be able to look, when he whom they have treated as an impoſtor, ſhall appear with a pomp and retinue, becoming the Son of God, and the Judge of the world? Will they not be alike unable to avoid *believing* then, as to juſtify their *unbelief* now? Then ſhall the [1] *unbelieving have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone*. This will be their proper part and portion.

Ah, why will not men be ſatisfied with the evidence which God is pleaſed to afford them, when this evidence is more than ſufficient to convince the humble and impartial? Why, let me add, will not thoſe who profeſs to believe that God hath appointed a day when he will judge the world by his Son,

[1] Rev. xxi. 8.

Son, whom he raiſed from dead, take more care to preſerve an agreement between their belief and their practice? Are we to be judged? And to be judged by Jeſus Chriſt? Have we (ſeting aſide the arguments from natural Reaſon) the ſame aſſurance of a Judgment to come, as of the Reſurrection of Chriſt, which is paſt? How is it then we are no more ſollicitous to provide for this Judgment? That we live ſo little like perſons who know they ſhall be judged? Is it becauſe the Redeemer of the world is to be the Judge of it? But conſider, if Chriſt be the Judge, his Goſpel is to be the Rule of Judgment. And whatever fooliſh hopes the wicked and impenitent may derive from their falſe notions of the *Perſon* of Chriſt, they are all deſtroyed by his *Goſpel*, which affords not the leaſt ſhadow of hope to any but the ſincerely penitent, who *deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world, looking for, and haſting to the coming of the day of Chriſt.*

v. Chriſt being riſen, I infer there will be a Reſurrection of the dead. This inference is ſo certain, that St. *Paul*, writing to the *Corinthians*, among whom there ſeemed to be ſome who denied this doctrine, ſcruples not to ſay, that [m] *if there be no Reſurrection of the dead, then is Chriſt not riſen.* The Reſurrection of mankind in general, but eſpe-

[m] 1 Cor. xv. 13.

eſpecially of true believers, may be argued from the Reſurrection of Chriſt.

1. Chriſt being riſen, there will be a Reſurrection of mankind univerſally, without the exception of any. For [n] *ſince by man came death, by man came alſo the Reſurrection from the dead; and as in Adam all die, ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.* Which reaſoning holds in a lower degree of all the poſterity of *Adam*, it being evident beyond all diſpute that men die becauſe ſubjected to death by *Adam*'s ſin; not this or that part of mankind only, but all, even thoſe that never *ſined after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion*; *Infants* who never ſined *actually*, and *Heathens* who never ſined againſt a poſitive or revealed law, a law threatening death to the tranſgreſſor. Now when there is this parallel drawn betwixt *Adam* and *Chriſt*, and the death, which is the effect of *Adam*'s ſin, is owned to be univerſal, how can we juſtly reſtrain the Reſurrection which comes by Chriſt? You ſee the Apoſtle in the place juſt cited from his Firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, makes uſe of the moſt general terms; as he likewiſe doth in his Epiſtle to the *Romans.* [o] *As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even ſo by the righteouſneſs of one the free gift came upon all men to juſtification of life.*

But ſhall all men be juſtified? Yes, in this ſenſe, that ſo far as the ſin of the firſt man

[n] 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. [o] Rom. v. 18.

imputed to his poſterity unto death, or to the bringing them under the law of mortality, they ſhall be freed from this ſin by a Reſurrection, here called *juſtification of life*. So that I cannot imagine what good reaſon any can have to make it a queſtion, *whether the Reſurrection of all, good and bad, be owing to Chriſt as Mediator*; or to ſtart any ſuch inquiry, as *whether there would have been no Reſurrection, if Chriſt had not undertook to reſtore us.* As to the firſt, the ſcripture is clear that good and bad equally ſhall be raiſed by the power of Chriſt. [p] *The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice,* (the voice of the *Son of God) and ſhall come forth, they that have done good, to the Reſurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the Reſurrection of damnation.* And how comes this great affair to be entruſted with our Lord Jeſus Chriſt? And in what character will he execute it? He himſelf hath told us in the verſe immediately preceding the paſſage juſt now quoted, that *the father hath given him authority to execute judgment, becauſe he is the ſon of man*; which is one of the titles of the *Meſſiah.* It is as the *Meſſiah* then, or that great Perſon, who by his mediation hath reſtored all men to a capacity of eternal life and ſalvation, that he will firſt raiſe all men, and then judge them. And ſince this is the pre-

[p] John v. 28.

preſent ſtate of things, it may ſeem but a needleſs inquiry, what would have been, if Chriſt had not undertaken the office of Mediator. Probably the fall of the firſt man would not have affected his poſterity, but on the proſpect of their being as great gainers by the *ſecond Adam*, as they are ſufferers by the *firſt*; in which caſe, the Death and Reſurrection of all mankind are equally parts of the ſame original plan.

The Reſurrection of the wicked will indeed be a puniſhment. But whoſe fault is that? Not the Mediator's, who procured it for them as a bleſſing, but their own; who by their ill behaviour in theſe mortal bodies, and in this ſtate of trial and probation, turn that which would have been a bleſſing into a curſe. Let us no longer therefore think it a hard law which dooms the poſterity to death for the ſin of their firſt parents; for, not to argue from other conſiderations, it is enough, that *as in Adam all die, ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.* Nor let it be objected, that all men indeed will riſe, but much the greater part will riſe to miſery; there is no place for ſuch an objection, becauſe men, in the ſtate of retribution, will not be puniſhed for *Adam*'s firſt ſin, but for their own multiplied and heinous tranſgreſſions. The Reſurrection is in itſelf a privilege, and intended for ſuch by him that obtained it for us; otherwiſe we ſhould be

obliged to ſay, that Jeſus Chriſt came into the world, and died, that all but a few might be more miſerable than elſe they would have been; which God forbid we ſhould think of him whoſe love to the children of men hath been always celebrated as without any parallel. That we ſhall riſe we know, becauſe Chriſt is riſen; that it is poſſible for us to attain to a happy Reſurrection we likewiſe know, becauſe upon any other ſuppoſition Chriſt would have been an enemy, as well as friend, to mankind; but whether our Reſurrection ſhall be *eventually* happy and glorious, depends on our preſent demeanour. It may be only the begining of ſorrows; an introduction to a ſtate of endleſs woe. And, if we may make a judgment of men by their lives and actions, it will be ſo to the moſt.

" Ah, how ſhould this ſtartle and alarm " us! How ſhould we fear leſt theſe bodies " being made the inſtruments of unrighte- " ouſneſs, ſhould become, through the righ- " teous judgment of God, the inſtruments " of our miſery, and inlets to none but pain- " ful and grievous ſenſations. By this means, " ſhall I not dearly pay for the few and " ſuperficial pleaſures of ſin? Whence do " the temptations to ſin moſtly, if not wholly, " ariſe, but from theſe bodies? Is it not to " gratify the appetites and inclinations of this " body, that I violate my duty to God?

" And

" And accordingly, when my body, in-
" ſtead of thoſe pleaſures which I once re-
" ceived from indulging its deſires, ſhall
" be the vehicle or occaſion of nothing elſe
" but pain and ſorrow, ſhall I not be able to
" diſcern my ſin in my puniſhment? And
" muſt it not therefore be great folly to in-
" dulge my body in forbidden inſtances?
" My ſinful delights are trifling and in-
" conſiderable, my miſery will be extreme;
" the former are fleeting and momentary, the
" latter will be everlaſting." So that the Reſurrection of the body, with the miſery hence ariſing to the wicked, is a very good reaſon why all men ſhould crucify the fleſh with its affections and luſts, that ſo doing, they may ſecure their title to a happy Reſurrection.

2. There is a more peculiar connection between the Reſurrection of Chriſt, and the Reſurrection of believers, correſpondent to the ſpecial relation between their perſons. Their alliance with Chriſt, and their intereſt in him, are ſuch as none elſe can claim. They are not only allied to him by the ſame *human nature*, but by their participation of *a divine nature*, that is, if we will ſpeak ſtrictly, by the exaltation of the human nature in them, into a conformity to the divine. They are *brethren*, not merely as deſcended from the ſame common Father of mankind, but, as all good men are the ſons of God by adoption, and as begoten

again to a new life after the image of Christ. The same *Spirit* is in the head and in the members. In *his incarnation* he partook of their *flesh*, by means of which he becomes related to all the sons of men; in *their regeneration* he makes them to partake of his *Spirit*, by virtue whereof the relation, before common, comes to be appropriate; and Christ is so theirs as to be theirs *only*. [q] *They are Christ's, and Christ is God's.* All shall hear the voice of the Son of God, but they only that have done good shall come forth to the Resurrection of life. Theirs shall be a blessed and glorious Resurrection, which can be said of none besides. And accordingly the Apostle, in that well-known Chapter the Fifteenth of the First of *Corinthians*, having made use of the Resurrection of Christ to establish the doctrine of the Resurrection in general, in the progress of that discourse, confines himself to the Resurrection of the just, which he describes in the most magnificent terms; *it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power*; &c.

The Resurrection of believers to immortality of bliss and glory, might be shewn to follow from the Resurrection of Christ many ways. But forasmuch as this is an ac-

[q] 1 Cor. iii. 23.

acknowledged truth among all that believe the Gospel, and evidently follows from what I have already said, waving any further proof of it, I shall only take notice, what a transporting prospect this is; what an irresistible motive *to bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begoten us again unto a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.* None but heavenly bodies can be qualified to injoy the heavenly inheritance, for *flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God, neither shall corruption inherit incorruption.* How could the Gospel have proposed a nobler object of our hopes than this? Or how have more manifestly proved itself a doctrine *worthy of all acceptation?* Is the Resurrection of Christ a confirmation of our Religion? The Resurrection of good men, which that secures is not less a recommodation of it. I own this doctrine of a Resurrection was one of those thing that prejudiced some of the heathens against Christianity, not only as apprehending it *impossible*, but a thing not to be *desired.* ‡ " The true awakening of the Soul " (saith *Plotinus*, an enemy of our Religion) is " an awakening from the body, and not a Re- " surrection with the body; for that change,

‡ *Stillingfleet's* answer to *Cressy.*

" which is together with the body, is but " paſſing from ſleep to ſleep, as it were " from one bed to another; but the true " awakening is from all bodies, which are " contrary to the ſoul, becauſe the nature " of one is oppoſite to the other." So far this *Platonick* Philoſopher. But now this offence againſt the doctrine of the Reſurrection proceeded from a manifeſt miſtake; partly of the *primitive ſtate* of human ſouls, and partly of the *nature* of thoſe bodies to which the ſpirits of juſt men ſhall be united after the Reſurrection. As to the *primitive ſtate* of human ſouls, they imagined it to have been a ſtate of diſunion or ſeparation from any ſenſible body, in which ſtate they were inexpreſſibly happy, till for ſome ſin, or ſins, that they were guilty of, they were thruſt down into theſe bodies, in which they ſuffer a great deal by way of puniſhment for their errors and offences in a former ſtate; yet, ſo that if they puriſy themſelves by the practice of virtue, they ſhall finally be delivered from the body, and live free and happy in a ſeparate ſtate, as at firſt. This was their notion, which, from the ſcripture-hiſtory of the creation, we know to be falſe. That tells us that the body was taken out of the duſt of the ground, and then the ſoul was breathed into it; and that this ſtate was a ſtate of innocence, till men brought a change into it,

it, by eating of the forbidden fruit; ſo that the ſoul was *originally* deſigned for a body, and not condemned to drag it about for a puniſhment.

And as they erred in their notion of the *primitive ſtate* of human ſouls, ſo likewiſe with reſpect to the *nature* of thoſe bodies, to which the ſouls of the righteous ſhall be reſtored. They found by experience, that the body as at preſent formed, was a torture and vexation; or, at beſt, a clog and a ſnare to the mind; and from hence they concluded, that it would be the ſame in a future ſtate if raiſed again: for which reaſon they denied any ſuch Reſurrection, not conſidering that thoſe ill qualities that cleave to our bodies at preſent, are not neceſſary appendages of matter, (for then thoſe *etherial* bodies, which they allowed of, having the ſame general nature of matter as any other bodies, would not be free from them) that the body that now is, is not the body that ſhall be; not as to its properties, though the ſubſtance be the ſame. They did not know, or attend to, the deſcription given by inſpired writers of the heavenly bodies of the ſaints; particularly, that they ſhall be bright, pure, active, ſpiritual, incorruptible, immortal; or did not believe that the matter of theſe bodies, in the hand of God himſelf, could put on theſe excellent qualities; which only argued their ignorance of the nature of matter,

matter, and of the almighty power, and infinite wiſdom of God. Whatever theſe men might think, who were ſpoiled through a falſe philoſophy, and vain deceit, or however meanly ſome others, who call themſelves *Chriſtians*, may talk of a Reſurrection, being drawn away by the like fooliſh imaginations, the Reſurrection of Chriſt ſhould be a pleaſing thought, for this very reaſon, that his Reſurrection proves the Reſurrection of all that truly believe in him, to eternal life, felicity, and glory. And there are theſe *two* uſes which ſuch ſhould make of this hope, and both exceeding obvious. The firſt is to ſupport them under all the inconveniences and ſufferings which they undergo in theſe bodies of ſin and death; the other to reconcile them to their departure out of theſe bodies.

1. The meditation and hope of a glorious Reſurrection ſhould ſupport us under all the inconveniences and hardſhips it pleaſes God we ſhould undergo in theſe bodies of ſin and death. That we ſuffer no more than it pleaſes God we ſhould, and than we muſt own ourſelves to have deſerved, ought for ever to ſilence all our complaints. But that which makes us not only patient but contented, and renders our afflictions not barely ſupportable, but light, ſo that we can *rejoice in tribulation*, is the reflexion, that it is no longer than while we are in theſe bodies,

bodies, which is but for a moment, that we are liable to ſo many and ſore trials, or to any at all; and the hope of thoſe celeſtial bodies, in which our ſouls are to have their everlaſting abode, bodies that will never occaſion them the leaſt uneaſineſs, tempt them to commit the leaſt ſin, or give them reaſon to think their union with them any hindrance to their freedom and happineſs. The infelicities attending the ſoul at preſent, by means of its union with the body, are innumerable. *Sin* dwells *in this mortal body*; and ſin expoſes the body to ſuffering; it is *a body of ſin*, and therefore *a vile body*, beſet and encompaſſed with evils of various kinds, and itſelf full of them. It is by the body we are chained to all the unhappy occurrences of the world, and have a ſhare in them, whether we will or no, which otherwiſe would affect us no more than they do a ſpirit in the other world. The body links us to outward objects, and is the foundation of thoſe many ſad and diſagreeable perceptions that we receive from them. It is by the body, that one man is expoſed to feel the malice and cruelty of another. And beſides what the ſoul ſuffers from the world by the body, how much does it ſuffer from the body immediately; from its pains, its ſickneſſes, and diſorders; from its dulneſs and weakneſs; from its inordinate paſſions and appetites; from its melancholy clouds

clouds and vapours. Had we not other bodies to expect, exempted from all theſe diſadvantages, we ſhould have need of a great deal of reſolution to bear up under our burthens; and after all, ſhould, in ſome uncommon caſes, ſink under them. If in this life only we had hope, man in ſome circumſtances would be of all creatures moſt miſerable, and the chriſtian ſometimes the moſt miſerable of all men. But now the hope of another life ſets man above the beaſts of the field; and the aſſurance of conſumate felicity both in ſoul and body, the chriſtian above other men. Should we have a larger ſhare of trouble, and ſickneſs, and pain than many, or moſt others, (though by the way we are very apt to think it larger than it is, and our portion of good things leſs) yet we have no cauſe to repine as long as we have hopes of a part in the firſt Reſurrection. No cauſe to repine, did I ſay? We have all poſſible cauſe to be eaſy, reſigned, and thankful.

2. The thought and hope of the Reſurrection ſhould reconcile good men to their departure out of this body. As incommodious as this earthly tabernacle is, the ſoul is ſeldom willing to leave it; it would fain linger here a little longer, wear its chains a little longer, converſe in this ſtrange country a little longer. But *when this tabernacle is diſſolved, are we not to have a building with God,*

God, a houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens? Though we lay down our lives, are we not to take them again? Though ſoul and body part, the parting is not final; they are to meet again, and, as friends ſometimes do after a long abſence, ſhall find each other wonderfully improved. So that though we did not *groan in this tabernacle*, as we do, *being burthened*; though our dungeon was not ſo dark and diſmal, and our abode in the world upon ſuch hard terms, yet to conſider the difference which at beſt there would be betwixt this world, and this body, and the next, ſhould make us deſpiſe the one, and chuſe the other.

At beſt this world is not heaven; this body is not a glorified body; the ſoul is here as a prince in a cottage; though it did not ſuffer, it would be ſollicited to ſin; though it was not miſerable, it could hardly be ſaid to be happy; at leaſt in no reſpect, or degree, ſo happy as it will be after Death and the Reſurrection; one of which muſt precede the other. And we may well be content to croſs the narrow ſea, was the paſſage a thouſand times more ſtormy than we are like to find it, when we know ourſelves to be in a ſafe bottom, and ſhall be landed on the ſhores of bliſs and immortality. "Go forth therefore, O my "ſoul, when thy maſter calls thee; go forth "readily and chearfully to meet him; re-

"pine

" pine not to leave the body, ſpurn this " earth, and fly upwards to thoſe manſions " of light, where thou ſhalt reſt in peace; " and joyfully, but not impatiently, wait " the time appointed for the Reſurrection " of this body, and of all the bodies of the " ſaints to glory and immortality!" I have now done with the Fifth Inference --- Chriſt being riſen, we know that there will be a Reſurrection of the dead, particularly of the righteous. To conclude.

VI. Chriſt being riſen, let us all endeavour *to know him, and the power of his Reſurrection.* There is a great deal of force and virtue in this article of our Creed; it inſpires life into thoſe that ſeriouſly contemplate it, and rightly improve it. *The Lord is riſen indeed.* Are we riſen with him? Are we *paſſed from death to life?* Beſides the Reſurrection of the body, which we expect hereafter, there is a change, and a very great one, which paſſes on the ſouls of the regenerate in this life, which is in ſcripture deſcribed under the metaphor of a Reſurrection. This is the Reſurrection of *grace*, as that is the Reſurrection to *glory*; and one is neceſſary to prepare and qualify for the other. To what purpoſe is my Saviour riſen, if I continue dead in treſpaſſes and ſins? In vain do I call him my Saviour, as long as ſin hath dominion over me; ſince this is the very ground and reaſon of his name

name *Jesus*, that *he saveth his people from their sins.* Let us not think the Resurrection of Christ is, or can be, of any avail to us, till it hath infused a quickening power into our souls. Let us shew that we are risen with Christ by a *holy* and by a *heavenly* life.

1. Let us lead a *holy* life; denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and aiming at the greatest purity and perfection. Let a more entire freedom from sin be what we most ardently desire, and pray for, and what we most earnestly labour after. [r] *We are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his Death, we shall be also in the likeness of his Resurrection.* There cannot be a Resurrection without a new life. Let us make it evident that we have *put off the old man, which is corrupt, with his affections and lusts*, by our *puting on the new man of the heart.* Let us be crucified with Christ, and live with him; and as when Christ died *he died unto sin once, but now that he liveth, he liveth unto God; likewise let us reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

2. That

[r] Rom. vi. 4, 5.

2. That we are riſen with Chriſt let us ſhew by a *heavenly* life. So the Apoſtle reaſons, [f] *If ye then be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above, where Chriſt ſiteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Chriſt in God.* As it is certain we are begoten to *a new life*, if we are *riſen with Chriſt*, ſo we know that the fountain of this life is in *heaven*, where, therefore, we ought to have our converſation. Chriſt is *our life*, (as the *Apoſtle* adds in the 4th verſe) *with whom, when he appears, we alſo ſhall appear in glory.* Now Chriſt is not only riſen, but aſcended; this earth was not a place fit to entertain him after he had left the grave; his buſineſs lay in another world, and to that world he returned, after that he through the Holy Ghoſt had given commandments to the *Apoſtles* whom he had choſen. In like manner we, if we be riſen, ſhall be ſeeking a heavenly country, and while our bodies are detained here below, our ſouls will be mounting upward; we ſhall aſcend in the viſions of faith, and the raptures of holy love.

" Why ſhould I ſeek the living among " the dead? My Lord is not here; he is " riſen and gone back to the Father; nei- " ther is my happineſs here. And why then " ſhould

[f] Col. iii. 1,——3.

" ſhould my heart be where I cannot hope
" to find my Saviour or my felicity? It is
" in yonder world, that my great, my lov-
" ed Redeemer hath his abode; there are
" the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect;
" there God unveils his glorious face; there
" my ſoul hopes to have its manſion after
" death, and thither, after the Reſurrection,
" will my body naturally aſcend. And
" where then, but in that happy, glorious,
" world, ſhould my affections now dwell?
" O let me not be a ſtranger to the thoughts
" of heaven! While I ſojourn in this vale
" of tears, this land of darkneſs, this diſ-
" tracted ſinful, wretched world, let me
" be longing, and preparing for my hea-
" venly home, where all tears ſhall be wip-
" ed away from mine eyes, the light of
" life break in upon them, and peace, and
" innocence, and joy, ſhall be my portion
" for ever."

A

SERMON

PREACHED at the

ORDINATION

Of the Reverend

Mr. THOMAS AMORY,

AND

Mr. WILLIAM CORNISH,

At *Taunton*, *Somerſet*, Oct. 7, 1730.

IN

Which, among other Things, the true Notion of Preaching CHRIST, and the Decay of the Diſſenting Intereſt are briefly conſidered;

With a large

PREFACE concerning the Foundations of Morality, and the excellent Morals of the Goſpel.

1731.

THE

PREFACE.

HAVING in the following Diſcourſe recommended to Miniſters the inſiſting, as they have opportunity, on the reaſonableneſs of the Chriſtian Religion, *particularly of its* precepts, *I thought it would not be altogether foreign to my deſign, if I ſpent a few pages by way of preface, in ſhewing that* morality is originally founded in the nature and relations of reaſonable Beings; *and that* it is one great excellency and commendation of the Religion of our bleſſed Saviour, that it hath given us a ſcheme of the pureſt, the moſt uſeful, and the moſt perfect morality that ever was.

By morality, *I would not have my readers to imagine I underſtand any ſuch low accompliſhment as owes its riſe wholly or chiefly to the dictates of* civil prudence, *or the rules of* external decorum. *I am contented that they call this* pagan morality, *or by any other name*

that they pleaſe, ſo it be not pretended that this is all the morality *that* Reaſon *leads men to practiſe. Theſe things are good in their kind, and by no means to be neglected, but they come very ſhort of the* morality *I am here ſpeaking of; which, according to my notion of it, ſignifies* ſuch a temper and habit of mind as effectually determines a man to make the beſt uſe of his faculties; even that uſe of them which is moſt for the honour of the divine Being from whom he hath received them, for the benefit of other reaſonable Beings, and the advancement of his own higheſt intereſt and happineſs. *This temper of mind is nothing elſe but the* affection of love *duly regulated and proportioned; regulated by the reaſon of things, and proportioned to the value and excellence of objects.*

The nature of man *being conſidered, together with* the relations *he ſtands in to* God, *and his* fellow-creatures, love *is the* firſt duty *he owes both to them, and to himſelf; a love of* deſire, delight, *and* gratitude, *mingled with an* awful veneration *to his* Maker; *a love of* benevolence *to other* intelligent Beings; *and a love enlightened by* wiſdom, *not flowing from* blind inſtinct, *to* himſelf. *To this love, and by conſequence, to all the actions that are the neceſſary effects, and genuine expreſſions of it, there muſt be an* obligation antecedent in nature to any laws and precepts concerning it, whether human or divine. *We are obliged*

to

to love God, not merely *becauſe he hath* commanded *us to love him, but becauſe he hath made us* capable *of loving him, and both by his* perfections *and his* benefits *challenges our love. Did not theſe oblige us to love him as ſoon as we were in a condition to make any reflection on them, no* ſubſequent command *could oblige us to it. Why elſe are theſe things* (viz. *the perfections of the divine nature, and the kindneſs and love of God to us) mentioned as reaſons of love which no ingenuous mind can reſiſt? For if they are good reaſons why we ſhould love God, now that he commands it, they muſt be equally reaſons for love antecedent to the conſideration of any command whatſoever. And perhaps if we examine the matter a little narrowly, we ſhall find that the* very command to love God *ſuppoſes an* obligation *to love him* prior *to the* command; *this love, as* an affection of the mind, *having no other proper* cauſe *and* motive *than the* amiable qualities, *and* beneficent actions *of the perſon beloved. We do not, we cannot, love any Being with a love of eſteem, of gratitude, and complacency, only becauſe he* requires it, *but becauſe he would* deſerve it, *even tho' he did not* require *it. And therefore I humbly conceive, the* command *to love God does not ſo* directly *reſpect the* affection of love itſelf, *becauſe this is not* directly *and* immediately *in our power; but our* uſing thoſe means *that are proper to beget* the love of

God *in our ſouls, among others, the contemplation of his* divine excellencies, *and the* relations *ſubſiſting between him and us, as he is our* Creator, Preſerver, *and* Redeemer; *and alſo, that we* conſider and do thoſe things *which may be expected from all ſuch as have the love of God dwelling in them.*

It were eaſy, after the ſame manner, to prove that an obligation to a wiſe *and* rational *love of* ourſelves, *and to* the love of our neighbour as ourſelves, *immediately ariſeth from the* relations *between us and other men, and from our* character *as Beings whoſe happineſs depends on their* own choice and behaviour. *And when I ſay that we are from the reaſon of things* under obligations *to this love of God, our neighbour, and ourſelves, and to the actions which as naturally flow from it (when they are in our power, and their connection with it is apprehended by the mind) as heat and light do from the fire; my meaning is, that the reaſon or nature of things* demands it from us, *that we ſhould be liable to* the reproaches of our own minds, *and* juſtly *draw on ourſelves* the cenſures of others, *and, above all the* diſpleaſure of the Author of our Beings, *if we indulged to a contrary temper and manner of acting.*

This obligation *may be ſtiled* an obligation of duty, *inaſmuch as love is* due *from men to men, and from men to God; and becauſe* due, *is* therefore *enjoined under the ſanction of rewards*

rewards and punishments. God himself would not require the love and obedience of his creatures if it was not a debt which they owed him before, and every debt *implies an* obligation to payment. *There is* another obligation *besides this, and very carefully to be distinguished from it, and that is an* obligation of interest. *It is manifestly our* interest *to obey God, because he can, and will reward us if we obey him, and punish us if we do not; and this being our* interest, *is therefore our* prudence, *but not, for that reason* alone, *our* duty. *On the contrary, there must be* duty *(the duty of* love, *and of* unlimited obedience, *as the consequence of love) antecedent to the* command, *and much more to the* penalty. *This is no more than saying that God, antecedent to his commanding any thing, hath a* right *to command it; for if there be an* antecedent right *on* his part, *there is an* antecedent obligation *on* ours; *and it is for this very reason that he lays his commands upon us, and to his commands adds threatenings, because the* relation, *of* Creator *and* Creatures, *of* Benefactor *and* Beneficiaries, *that is between him and us, gives him a* right to command, *and obliges us to* obey. *Were there no obligation but that of* interest, *there could be* no duty, *properly so called; and where there was no* duty, *there could be no* punishment *justly deserved, unless it be just to punish any one for not doing what he was not obliged to do,*

do, or what he would not have been obliged to do, even by the command itſelf, had not the threatening been ſuperadded; in which caſe the threatening muſt be unjuſt, and ſo conſequently the puniſhment threatened. This obligation of duty *may be* increaſed *by the conſideration of thoſe* rewards *and* puniſhments *which God hath annexed to his laws; not as theſe rewards and puniſhments* immediately *affect our intereſt and happineſs, but as the* promiſe *of the reward, and the delight which God takes in beſtowing it, are a manifeſtation of the divine goodneſs; and ſo likewiſe the* threatening *of the puniſhment (the puniſhment being therefore* threatened *that it may not be* inflicted) *and* in that view *ſtrengthen our obligation to love and gratitude.*

This, I take it, is a plain and intelligible account of thoſe moral fitneſſes in things, *and* eſſential and everlaſting differences of actions, *which* ſome *have as warmly and unaccountably* denied, *as* others *have ſtrongly argued for them. All* rational Beings *are* moral agents; *ſuch an agent is* man, *capable of* diſcerning *a difference in actions, that ſome of them are ſuitable to his nature, and the circumſtances of his Being, others not; and of* chuſing *and* determining *according to this difference. Now there being ſuch a difference between things and actions, as to their agreement or diſagreement with his rational nature (e. g. between gratitude to God, and ingra-*

ingratitude) there is a manifeſt fitneſs *in ſome and* unfitneſs *in others, and theſe* fitneſſes *or* unfitneſſes, *as far as the former, are the object of a* complacential choice, *and the latter of a* deliberate diſlike, *and both theſe are* free, *may juſtly be called* moral, *becauſe they regard* moral agents, *and theſe, as conſidered in their* moral capacity; *and theſe* moral agents *are properly* obliged *to govern themſelves by theſe* fitneſſes, *becauſe they will be* worthy of blame, *if they do not.*

It may not be unuſeful to unfold this matter a little more diſtinctly. Notwithſtanding then the ideas of natural *and* moral fitneſs, *and of* natural *and* moral good *are not* formally *the ſame, yet there is an inſeparable connection between them; ſo that no diſpoſition or action can be fit or good in a* natural ſenſe, *but there muſt be a* moral fitneſs *attending it, and when cloathed with its proper circumſtances, it will be* morally good. *The actions of Virtue and Religion have a* natural fitneſs or goodneſs in them, as they are in their own nature adapted to anſwer ſeveral valuable ends and purpoſes. *e. g. the love of God, a conſtant regard to him in the whole of our behaviour, and ſolemn acts of worſhip, being agreeable to that ſtate of dependence which all* created *Beings have on the* firſt *and* uncreated, *and expreſſive of their ſenſe of this their dependence, and of the* goodneſs of God *which hath communicated life with all the advantages of it to them, are there-*

therefore naturally fit and good. *In the ſame ſenſe, juſtice and charity have an undiſputed* fitneſs *and* goodneſs, *becauſe it is by theſe that ſociable Beings contribute to their mutual advantage and pleaſure, and without them had better live apart than together. And who is there that reflects on the apparent tendency of temperance, and the right imployment of our time and thoughts to preſerve the body in health and vigour, and to improve and enlarge the mind, but muſt be forced to acknowledge that there is* a natural goodneſs and fitneſs *in theſe things? This may ſerve to explain the* natural fitneſs *and* goodneſs *of Virtue and Religion. They are denominated* naturally fit and good, *not as if the* object *of them was* immediately *ſome* natural good, *or* pleaſure, *but from their* natural fitneſs *or* goodneſs *to anſwer ſome conſiderable end.*

From this natural fitneſs *that which is* moral *can no more be disjoined, than* eligibleneſs *can be from* happineſs, *or* lovelineſs *from* beauty *and* proportion. *For becauſe the actions and diſpoſitions before mentioned are fited to anſwer all good ends, therefore it is fit that Beings, capable of it, ſhould* deliberately chuſe *to perform ſuch actions, not now and then, but conſtantly; and make it their endeavour to excel in ſuch diſpoſitions. This, I ſay, is* morally fit, that rational, free, and active Beings, ſhould exerciſe their Reaſon in convincing themſelves of the excellency, and congruity

gruity of Virtue and Religion, their freedom in the choice of them, and all the powers of their nature in an agreeable courſe of action. *If there be a* right *and a* wrong *in the uſe of our faculties*, this uſe *of them* is right, *and* the contrary *would be* wrong; *and to a Being that can diſtinguiſh between* right *and* wrong, *there is an* indiſpenſible moral fitneſs *in the former, and* unfitneſs *in the latter. In ſpite of their utmoſt endeavours to extinguiſh in themſelves the ſenſe of* good *and* evil, *men are invincibly conſcious, that one way of uſing their faculties is good, and another evil; that it is reaſonable and fit that they ſhould obſerve and follow this diſtinction, and that it will be impoſſible, blind as they are to their own failings, they ſhould ever forgive themſelves, if they do not. Theſe* two *things then are plainly diſtinguiſhable*, the natural fitneſs of an action to anſwer ſome valuable end, *and* the rational and delightful choice of it, *which is its* moral fitneſs; *diſtinguiſhable I ſay, not ſeparable; ſince it is not a thing ſubject to the determination of any will whatſoever whether it ſhall be* fit *for a reaſonable Being to act reaſonably; and whether he ſhall be* obliged *ſo to act; the thing is eſſentially, unchangeably, and everlaſtingly neceſſary.*

Nor does this notion of moral fitneſſes *and* obligations *not depending upon* will *and* pleaſure, *but neceſſarily reſulting from the* nature *and* reaſon *of things, at all derogate from the* honour

honour *of the Deity. On the contrary, one of the cleareſt and moſt convincing arguments in behalf of theſe* neceſſary fitneſſes *and* obligations *is that which is drawn from the* moral perfections *of the divine nature, which can never be proved on any other principles. In a late Controverſy between two eminent* Divines *of the* Eſtabliſhed Church, *One of them puts this queſtion,* Whether if God had commanded men to be unjuſt and ungrateful, it would have been morally good to be unjuſt and ungrateful? *To which the other anſwers,* that it is puting an abſurd, ſelf-contradictory ſuppoſition, for it is ſuppoſing a God that is not neceſſarily wiſe and good, a God and no God.* *But where, I pray, is the abſurdity of this queſtion, in caſe there be no* moral fitneſſes *with regard to* human actions, *previous in* nature *to the* will *of God? If there be no ſuch* fitneſſes *with regard to* human actions, *neither can there be with reſpect to the* divine, *till God hath* willed *them; and then his* willing

* As abſurd as he accounts this ſuppoſition, a writer called *Zeglovius,* was not aſhamed formerly to tell the world, that God may pleaſe out of the abſolute ſovereignty of his Will to command all that wickedneſs he hath forbidden, and to forbid all that holineſs he hath commanded. Now we may ſuppoſe he would not have talked thus, if he had judged it to be a neceſſary conſequence of the principle, that things are *morally* good or evil *only* becauſe God hath commanded or forbidden them. Vid. *Free diſcourſe between two intimate friends in defence of the principles and practices of ſome moderate Divines of the Church of England.* Printed 1670.

ing *any thing, whatever it be, will make it* morally fit. *Was it* morally *fit that God ſhould* govern *his reaſonable creatures according to the* natures *he had given them, and reward or puniſh them according to their* actions? *Grant this, and it will unavoidably follow, that there was the ſame* fitneſs *that men ſhould* act *according to the nature they had received from God; ſince if there was no* fitneſs *that men ſhould* act *according to their nature and relations, but what was produced by the* will of God *that they ſhould ſo act, there was then no* fitneſs, *unleſs the plaineſt reaſonings of our minds may deceive us; and could be none, for God's* governing *men according to their nature and relations, but what depended upon the ſame abſolute* will. *After the* exiſtence *of God, and the* perfection *of his nature is taken for granted; yet that* this, *or* that, *is a perfection, we muſt have ſome way of knowing before we can ſay that God is poſſeſſed of it. We could have no ground to affirm, that God is* true, juſt, *and* good, *but upon the ſuppoſition that* truth, *and* juſtice, *and* goodneſs *do neceſſarily imply perfection or ſomething better than the contrary; and if, on this account, we attribute them to God as neceſſary perfections of his nature, we muſt, on the ſame account, eſteem man obliged to practiſe, and imitate God in them as the perfection of his; the imitation being poſſible, and a foundation laid for it in the frame of every reaſonable Being.*

The

The notion of moral fitneſſes *being thus ſtated and defended, let any impartial perſon judge whether a late writer (not quite ſo remarkable for his candour as his talents) hath given a fair repreſentation of it, when he charges thoſe on that ſide with going upon the* independent bottom, and ſeting up a ſyſtem of morality without God at the head of it. *One would think by this, that the opinion of* moral fitneſſes *and* obligations *was the offspring of* atheiſm, *or very near a-kin to it, and that* Hobbs, *and others of that* fraternity *were the great patrons of it. Whereas the truth of the caſe is, that none have oppoſed the* moral differences *of things and actions ſo much as the* atheiſts *have done, and they who have appeared for them have been the moſt ſtrenuous and ſucceſsful aſſertors of the principles of Religion. This will need no proof as long as there are ſuch names as* Grotius, Cudworth, Clarke, Woolaſton, *&c. It is not ſuppoſed by theſe* independent ſchemiſts, *as he calls them, that there is any ſuch thing as* obligation *previous in* time *to the* will *of God, but only in* order of nature; *neither is it ſuppoſed that this* obligation *hath properly the nature of a* law *(to which word the idea affixed is that of* the will of a rightful ſuperior) *but as it receives the ſtamp or ſeal of a divine command: nor finally, do they ſuppoſe that the commands of God can extend to* no other *actions but ſuch as had an original ana antecedent* fitneſs *in them. On the contrary,*

from

from the nature and dependence of man, and the authority, wiſdom, and goodneſs of God, they infer the obligation *of man to obey God without reſerve.* The obligation to obedience *neceſſarily reſults from the* nature *of things, while ſome of the particular* inſtances *and* trials *of this* obedience *may depend entirely on* the will of God.

There is one objection lies againſt this account of moral obligations, *which I the rather take notice of becauſe in anſwering it I ſhall have an opportunity to ſhew the meanneſs and inconſiſtency of the contrary principles.* Let us *(ſaith the ingenious author before quoted)* imagine fitneſſes to be the rule to go by, and no Deity at the head of them to bind and enforce them, it may be fit for a man to obſerve them as far as is conſiſtent or coincident with his temporal happineſs; and that will be no virtue or duty, but ſelf-intereſt only and love of the world.—But if God commands us to poſtpone our preſent intereſt, honour, or pleaſure to publick conſiderations, it is then fiting and reaſonable becauſe God by engaging us to it becomes our ſecurity that we ſhall not finally, or in the laſt reſult be loſers by it; what would otherwiſe be folly, now commences duty and virtue, and puts on obligation.

Here I muſt take leave to aſk, who ſuppoſes that there are fitneſſes *without* a Deity *at the head of them, to bind and enforce them?*

On the contrary, becauſe there are eternal and unchangeable fitneſſes *in things, we therefore conclude it to be the pleaſure of the eternal and unchangeable Being, and that it ever will be ſo, that his reaſonable creatures ſhould do whatſoever is thus* fit *and* becoming. *And it is only from theſe* unchangeable fitneſſes *in things that we can be certain of the unchangeableneſs of God in his* purpoſes, *and* government of the world.

Again; *ſeting aſide* a future ſtate, *it may not be very eaſy to prove that a man is* obliged *to do any thing inconſiſtent with his own preſent happineſs in order to promote the happineſs of others; nay, I believe, was the matter to be decided by vote, it would be carried by a great majority that no man is obliged to this, and that the thing is not in itſelf* morally fit. *Not to enter into a needleſs diſpute,* be it ſo, *all that follows from hence is, that the* principles *of human actions are not all of the ſame* force *and* efficacy; *nor* fitneſſes *of the ſame* rank *and* order; *that ſelf-love, as* an inſtinct *will prevail againſt benevolence, and as a* duty *may be allowed to do it, ſhould they happen to interfere in the* laſt reſult. *This, I ſay, is what follows from hence, but by no means that there is no ſuch thing as a* benevolent temper, *natural or acquired, or that whoever refuſes to do kind and benevolent actions at the expence of his own Being and happineſs, hath nothing of benevolence in him;*

and

and when he does that which is right in itself is not moved to it by virtue and duty, but only by self-love, and the love of the world.

A benevolent disposition, and a sense of duty may be the principle of the service he does his fellow-creatures, though this benevolent disposition does not work so strongly as self-love, and must therefore, as often as there is a competition of interests, give place to it, and a man might not think it his duty *to make a sacrifice of his* all *for the sake of others. Let self-love compared with benevolence be in* weight *but as* eight *to* seven, *it is evident that the balance will break on the side of self-love, and yet benevolence hath really the same* weight *then as at other times, though not the same* effect, *(as seven of any kind of weight hath against eight of the same weight) and accordingly, let self-love be taken out of the opposite scale, or a small part of self-love weigh against the whole of benevolence (that is, a lesser inconvenience of our own against some very great advantage of a neighbour, or of the publick) and there are thousands in the world who would immediately discover by their actions that they were no strangers to benevolence.*

And it is very remarkable that in those instances in which from a superiority of self-love men prefer their own interest to that of others, they seldom, if ever, act with that full bent of nature, and that perfect ease and satisfaction of mind as when they can by one and the same

action do themselves a kindness, and another man too; or be serviceable to others, though they have no private advantage by it. Where is that person who in a shipwrack would not be better pleased to save the lives of others together with his own, than to be under a necessity, if he will save himself, of thrusting off another from a plank that would sink with the weight of both? The pleasure of the escape would by such a circumstance be exceedingly diminished. If when the happiness of this life is supposed to be our whole happiness, *we must not be allowed in any of our beneficent actions to be influenced by a principle of virtue, but by self-love only, because we should decline doing those actions were they irreconcileable with that happiness; for the very same reason it would be purely self-love, and not virtue or duty, to do the same actions only because God is our security that we shall not* finally *in the last result be losers by them. Why must it destroy the notion of Virtue and Duty, so far to regard our present happiness as not to act in opposition to it, in case our* present *happiness be our* all, *any more than having regard to a future happiness does it; since* self *alike preponderates on both suppositions?*

On the foot *which this Author makes the whole of* obligation *to rest upon, it seems to me that there can be no such thing as Virtue; that even the exactest obedience to the divine command would not be so. For see how he further*

ther explains himself. If God commands it (*that we sacrifice our own temporal happiness to the publick*) he binds us, he obliges us to it, by connecting our true and certain happiness with it. When we submit to temporal pains, self-denials, restraints, losses, damages, for the publick good, this is properly virtue. And yet this is not virtue unless God commands it, because that alone can make it in our circumstances rational, fiting or safe to do it. *And again*, the obligation to obey God resolves into the necessity we are under as rational and thinking Beings, to pursue our own most true and lasting happiness. *What can be plainer than that according to this representation of the matter we do nothing for the sake of our fellow-creatures, or because God hath commanded it, but because he will reward it? And if we esteem the obligation to come* wholly *from hence, and should never do good actions but on this account,* (viz. *from the prospect of* future happiness, *not from favours* already received *&c.) where is the* duty, *where is the* love of God *and* our neighbour? *But now, when (though the reward promised by God be an* additional motive *to action, and we should not seek the publick good in instances that did not stand with our* intire interest) *we yet do good from a benevolent temper, and because we are persuaded it is our duty to do it, especially as God hath commanded it, whom we obey from a sense of*

its being fit *and* becoming, *as well as for our* intereſt, *that we ſhould do ſo, here is* virtue, *and* love, *and* goodneſs, *but upon no other* hypotheſis *that I can ſee.*

To me it appears a very ſtrange way of thinking; we do good to others becauſe we are inclined, *and believe that we* ought *to do it, and yet becauſe we ſhould not judge ourſelves obliged to it, if our temporal happineſs (ſuppoſed to be our* all) *was to be the price of it, and our diſintereſted inclinations would in this caſe be over-ruled by a ſtronger regard to ourſelves,* therefore *there is no virtue or benevolence in what we do. On the other hand, we do good, not becauſe we have* really *any inclination to it, and think it to be* fit *and* becoming *on ſeveral conſiderations, particularly* God's having commanded it, *but* ſolely *on the account of the* reward *promiſed in another life,* therefore *this is not ſelf-intereſt, but duty, virtue, the love of God and of man. This ſort of reaſoning is, I own, paſt my comprehenſion.*

Upon the whole, this notion which reſolves all obligation *into the* promiſes *and* threatenings *annexed to the law of God, or, which is the ſame thing, into the* hopes *and* fears *of mens minds raiſed by them, though it preſuppoſes the* will *of God which hath enacted the law, and fixed the ſanction, yet, under pretence of doing more honour to God and his law, hath in reality no reſpect to them at all,*

but

but terminates wholly in self-interest; *whilst the other notion which asserts* obligations *antecedent in nature to the* will *of* God, *carries in it a tacit acknowledgment of the necessary and immutable perfections of God, and of his unmerited favour which hath bestowed* Being *with all the privileges belonging to it; forasmuch as among these* antecedent obligations, *the* obligation *to the love of God, and a chearful obedience to his* will, *is one of the principal. This being so, the only persons that can have any* colour *for charging this opinion as wanting in a proper regard to God, are they who hold* all *that this opinion implies, and* abundantly more, *even* an obligation *so to love God for his own sake, as for his sake to consent to be miserable,* an obligation *to put off* self *entirely, and renounce all views to any interest of our own.*

Men in distress of conscience *(saith one of this* superangelical way, *as I find him cited, for I have not the book)* if they have comfort from Christ are contented, if they have salvation from hell by Christ they are contented, but Christ himself (*that is, Christ without comfort and without salvation)* contents them not. *This I confess is such a flight in Religion as leaves all other schemes, even that which unites the love of God with self-love, far below it. But it hath one unhappiness attending it, and that is, that it is* absolutely impracticable. *It is a very just ob-*

ſervation, that all which ſuch Diſcourſes can do is either to make men hypocrites, by pretending to do what they cannot, or to make honeſt men, who cannot thus cheat and delude themſelves, deſpair of their ſalvation, becauſe they cannot find themſelves contented without it. To which I ſhall only add, that when God *and* nature, reaſon *and* ſcripture *have joined the love of God with the hope of a reward, it is but preſumption in any man to endeavour to put them aſunder.*

The other thing which I obſerved in the entrance of this Preface was, that one great excellence and commendation of the Religion of our bleſſed Saviour is this, that it hath given us a ſcheme of the pureſt, the moſt uſeful, and the moſt ſublime morality that ever was. *This will not be denied by any one that peruſes the* original records of Chriſtianity, *I mean the* ſcriptures *of the* New Teſtament, *with an unprejudiced mind, and conſiders in what a native ſimplicity of language, and yet with what a commanding authority, the moſt exalted maxims and rules of life are there delivered. Is not our* reaſon *as much pleaſed and ſatisfied as our* corrupt inclinations *are offended with that Religion in which the nobleſt heights of divine and human virtues, ſacrificing our lives for the truth, forgiving injuries, doing good for evil, the moſt raiſed devotion, the moſt ſpiritual worſhip, the moſt active gratitude, the moſt extenſive and diſintereſted benevolence,*

volence, the greateſt purity, the moſt unaffected humility, and, in fine, the moſt generous contempt of all the periſhing enjoyments of time and ſenſe, are taught; *and not only* taught *but* preſſed *upon us by conſiderations drawn from the* imitation of the moſt perfect of all Beings, *from the* example *of the* incarnate word, *from the* love of God and of Jeſus, *from the* glorious diſcoveries *that are made to us in the Goſpel, and* the bright and lovely hopes to *which it hath begoten us; that is, by the moſt powerful and perſuaſive arguments that can poſſibly enter into the heart of man to conceive. Such* a morality *as this, ſo recommended and enforced, is certainly a very great honour to our Religion. For the ſame* reaſon *that proves there muſt be* moral duties, *which having their foundation in the* nature of things *are immediately obligatory upon all reaſonable Beings, makes it evident that* the will of God *cannot but always conſpire with the reaſon of things; ſo that it is alike impoſſible that God ſhould* not *command ſuch things as are* morally fit *and* becoming, *and that he ſhould command any thing that hath the leaſt* moral unfitneſs *in it; that therefore the* doctrine of Chriſt *being qualified to ſtand this teſt, and never appearing ſo lovely and excellent as when it is tried by it, hath one very conſiderable mark of its being a* divine Religion, *and leaves no room for reaſonable doubt that it is ſo when the other arguments*

ments for its truth, from miracles, prophecies, ſucceſs, *&c. are added to this.*

The inference *from all which is, that we are exceedingly indebted to the* author of our faith *as upon* other accounts *ſo particularly on* this, *that, in the preſent corrupt ſtate of mankind, when* human reaſon *was ſo* enfeebled *by luſt and paſſion,* perverted and over-ruled *by eſtabliſhed cuſtoms, and* bewildered *among the numberleſs and claſhing opinions into which the world was divided, he hath ſet before us in the cleareſt and moſt engaging light the* whole duty *and* intereſt of man. *Should it therefore be granted that* Chriſtianity, *as to the main of its* precepts, was as old as the creation, *yet foraſmuch as* truth *had ſlept or been impriſoned almoſt from the begining of the world to the* coming of Chriſt, *(I ſpeak of the greater part of mankind) and* error *had walked abroad in its name, and both challenged and received the honours due to it, what thanks does* he *deſerve at our hands who ſet the priſoner free, and drove the impoſtor and uſurper from many of its ſtrong holds? Let the excellent* morals *of the Chriſtian Religion have been as* old *as time itſelf, yet it is certain that in ſeveral reſpects they were* new *to the world when our Saviour republiſhed them. And what then are we to think of men that can argue after this abſurd and perverſe manner?* " *There* " *can be no ſuch thing as a* revealed Religion, " *becauſe if that which pretends to be ſo contains* " *nothing but what the light of nature dictates*

" *to*

" *to all men, it is* needleſs; *and if it adds* " *any thing beyond what that teaches, it is* " falſe, *and ſo is in neither caſe to be ad-* " *mited under the character of a divine and* " *ſupernatural revelation.*" *As if God might not ſee proper to inſtitute* poſitive duties *for the trial of the obedience and reſignation of his creatures, to fence the* moral law, *or to be in ſome other way ſubſervient to it, or even in compliance with the innocent prejudices of mankind who would be leſs pleaſed with a revelation that preſcribed none but* natural duties; *or might not have* good reaſons *for ſuch commands that did not always and on firſt ſight appear to us; or as if the circumſtances of man* fallen *and* innocent, enjoying *a* revelation *and* deſtitute *of it, being different, new duties would not ariſe out of theſe different circumſtances; and* finally, *as if it was no kindneſs to have ſuch a plain and compleat ſummary of duties prepared to our hands as* reaſon *could not have diſcovered, and put together without a great deal of difficulty, and perhaps never actually did, eſpecially in the advantageous manner in which the* precepts *of the* Goſpel *are conveyed to us, being attended with the promiſe of* divine aſſiſtance, *and eſtabliſhed by the ſanction of an* everlaſting reward.

On the other hand, tho' I would not knowingly give any juſt *ground of offence, yet I cannot forbear, before I cloſe this Preface, taking occaſion to lament the great prejudice which*

Chriſt

Chriſtianity *hath ſuffered thro' the* indiſcreet zeal *of ſome perſons who, I doubt not, are very ſincere in the profeſſion of it. For while they ſet* Revelation *and* Reaſon *at variance one with the other they undeſignedly gratify the* infidels, *to whom no conceſſion can be more acceptable than that* Chriſtianity *hath little or no ſupport from* Reaſon, *and declares open war againſt it; which, tho' it may be very true of ſome things to which men have given the name of* Chriſtian Doctrines, *is utterly falſe of* Chriſtianity *itſelf, which is no leſs the* wiſdom *than the* power of God to ſalvation to them that believe.

It were well if ſome perſons would allow themſelves to uſe their Reaſon *ſo far as to examine the* Doctrines *which they have been taught to believe by their* natural influence *upon the* duties *and* virtues *of the chriſtian life. This rule they can have the leſs to object againſt, becauſe it agrees with* that *laid down by our* bleſſed Saviour *himſelf*, by their fruits ye ſhall know them; *for I imagine it will appear probable to thoſe who carefully read the context, that* by their fruits *(the fruits of the* falſe prophets) *we are, in part, if not chiefly, to underſtand* the corrupt fruits of their doctrines, *which might properly be called* their fruits, *both becauſe the doctrines, which had a natural tendency to produce theſe fruits, were taught by them, and their teaching ſuch doctrines proceeded from the depravity of their hearts.*

And

And if this was our Saviour's *meaning, it is plainly implied, that no* true doctrine *can have a bad influence on the* practical part *of Religion, any more than* a good tree can bring forth evil fruit.

Are there any Doctrines *then, the obvious tendency of which, inſtead of inſpiring and cheriſhing the* love of God, *is to damp the flame of that divine affection, and to beget a* ſervile tormenting fear, *which that love was intended to caſt out, together with endleſs and unanſwerable doubts and jealouſies; to darken our* contemplations *of God, to check our devout* aſpirations *towards him, and to unfit us for thoſe exerciſes of praiſe and thankſgiving in which every pious chriſtian ſhould be perpetually imployed;* Doctrines *which, when followed into their plain conſequences, harden the heart againſt the more generous and humane paſſions, confine, and debaſe it, countenance any wrong turn and diſpoſition of mind, and teach men to think ſlightly of the neceſſity of holineſs; in a word, which lead them aſtray from God while they think they are imitating him; are there any ſuch* Doctrines *as theſe? To ſay the leaſt, no good man ſhould be very haſty in giving them credit, or very fond of holding them faſt, how long ſoever they have had poſſeſſion of him. For truth is ever uniform and conſiſtent with itſelf, truth in the* underſtanding *with truth in the* will, affections, *and* practice. Chriſtianity *is a ſyſtem compoſed of two other ſyſtems,*

one

one *of things to be* believed, *the* other *of things to be* done; *and between theſe* two *there is ſuch a perfect harmony, they are ſo adjuſted one to the other, and receive ſo much light and ſupport one from the other, that as the* beauty *and* ſtrength *of the* whole *is hereby greatly increaſed, ſo to a ſerious and judicious mind it muſt appear to be* a frame of Religion put together by a divine hand.

If the Sermon *hath little in it to entertain the reader, yet it is hoped that it may fare ſomewhat the better for the ſake of the excellent* Charge * *it introduces, which gave very great pleaſure and ſatisfaction from the Pulpit; and, there is reaſon to think, will not be leſs acceptable to all impartial perſons from the Preſs.*

* In the firſt Edition of the Sermon there was publiſhed with it a Charge, delivered on the ſame Occaſion, by Dr. *Milner*.

SERMON XIII.

On Living unto CHRIST.

PHILIP. I. 21.

For to me to live is Christ.

AMONG all the first conversions to the Christian Faith, which were very surprizing upon other accounts besides the greatness of their numbers, there was not one (at least of those that are come down to our knowledge) so remarkable as that of the Apostle *Paul*; as there was no one person who, after his conversion, proved a more able and zealous advocate for the cause he had espoused. If an excess in his regard to the *Law of Moses*, and a mistaken notion of it as intended to continue forever, had been the only hindrances to his becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ, we may justly suppose so great a master of reason as he was, and a man of equal integrity, could not long have stood out against the

the evidence which the Gospel came attended with: but we are to consider, that he was a *Pharisee* as well as a *Jew*, bred up in a sect of their religion that was strict even to superstition, and *was more exceedingly zealous than many of his equals in his own nation of the traditions of his fathers* [a]; that is, of *rights*, and *ceremonies*, and *articles of faith* that were not to be found in the *Law* and the *Prophets*, but had been added to them, in the way of *supplement*, by the *wisdom of men*. And this it was that prejudiced him so highly against the Christian Religion on account of its simplicity, and made him a persecutor of all that professed it. A man of his honest nature, and good understanding, could never else have fallen into a practice which the first principles of *humanity* condemn. And, perhaps, it will be found upon inquiry, that there never was such a thing as persecution *merely* for truth's sake. *Pure religion, and undefiled before God* tends to inspire a meek, a gentle, and charitable spirit; and I believe never fails of being accompanied with it, if not counteracted in its influence: but when the opinions and commandments of men are taught for the doctrines and institutions of God, these, having no foundation in *reason* or *scripture*, must be supported by human authority, and this authority defended by outward force and com-

[a] Gal. i. 14.

compulsion, because not capable of any better proof.

Such a one was *Paul* in his *unbelief*. And what then shall we say, when, on a sudden, we find him so entirely changed from what he was before? [b] *A preacher of the faith which he once destroyed; and ready, for the name of Christ, not only to be bound, but to die*; even for that name, which, as much as he once hated it, he now reverenced and loved next to the name of *God* himself? No two persons could well differ more widely from one another than *Saul* the *Pharisee* did from *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ*. And from what could such an alteration in his behaviour proceed but from a real deep conviction of his mind? Or to what must we ascribe this conviction but to those extraordinary causes of it mentioned in the sacred history; viz. a *light*, and *voice* from heaven, when he was on his way to *Damascus*; attended, we may suppose, with [c] *a revelation of Christ within him*; from this first, and from the *demonstration of the spirit* afterwards, in his miraculous powers, of which he both largely partook himself, and was made a steward or dispenser to others? To which may be added the apparent excellency of the christian doctrine, which, as soon as his prejudices gave him leave to attend to it, *entered into his heart, and was pleasant to his soul.*

[b] Gal. i. 23. Acts xxi. 13. [c] ix. 3, 4.

In this ſingle conqueſt we behold *the arm of the Lord* moſt ſignally *revealed*, and cannot forbear crying out, "ſurely the Religion "of Jeſus is divine!" Our faith receives an additional confirmation from that of St. *Paul*, and our zeal is enkindled by his. When we find this great and good man valuing himſelf upon being an [d] *Apoſtle*, a *Servant*, [e] a *Priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt*; [f] determined to know nothing among the *Corinthians* but *Chriſt* and *him crucified*; and, in this Firſt Chapter of his Epiſtle to the *Philippians*, [g] *rejoicing that Chriſt was preached*, tho' by thoſe who were no friends of his; nay, expreſſing his deſire that Chriſt [h] *might be magnified in his body, whether it was by life, or by death*; and then, as the reaſon of this, declaring (what all his actions made good) that *to him to live was Chriſt, and to die was gain:* when, I ſay, we conſider all this, who, that hath the leaſt ſpark of devotion for his Redeemer, does not perceive it awakened and encreaſed by this illuſtrious example, and reſolve that to him likewiſe *to live ſhall be Chriſt*, in the fulleſt meaning of thoſe words that he can poſſibly come up to?

My deſign, in the following Diſcourſe, is briefly to ſet before you this moſt amiable character in ſeveral views.

I. As

[d] Rom. i. 1. 1 Cor. i. 1. [e] Eph. iv. 1. [f] 1 Cor. ii. 2. [g] Ver. 18. [h] Ver. 20.

I. As exemplified moſt eminently, and to the greateſt degree of perfection, in the *Apoſtles* of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.
II. As belonging, in a lower degree, to the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt in every age of the church, and worthy of their utmoſt ambition and care to excel in it.
III. As that by which all the genuine profeſſors of the Goſpel are known, and diſtinguiſhed.

The general character of all theſe ever hath been, and ever will be, one and the ſame. Good men have always agreed in their regard to Chriſt as their *Saviour*, their *Pattern*, and their *Lord*; and as well they who never ſaw Chriſt in the fleſh, as thoſe who converſed perſonally with him, have loved him more than the deareſt comforts and injoyments[i] of life, more than life itſelf. Nor could it be otherwiſe, ſince Chriſt being the life of holy ſouls[k], the ſpring and fountain of their ſpiritual life, by means of which he liveth in them, and the author of an eternal life in the heavens, all ſuch cannot but [l] *live unto the Lord*. Which, by the way, I take to be an expreſſion exactly parallel to that in the text; for whether it be ſaid that *we live unto Chriſt*, or that *to us to live is*

[i] Mat. x. 37, 38, 39. [k] Col. iii. 4. [l] Rom. xiv. 8.

Chriſt, the meaning ſeems to be this, that *the love of Chriſt* in our ſouls is our governing *principle*, the *authority of Chriſt* in the Goſpel our conſtant *rule*, and the *honour and intereſt of Chriſt* in the world our chief *aim*; that by theſe we give laws to our inclinations, purify and exalt our paſſions, frame our deſigns, and conduct the whole courſe of our actions; all which concur, as ſo many lines, in this center; that our thoughts and purſuits are connected, controuled, or quickened, by this one view; I mean, in ſome good meaſure, and according to the proportion of our love to the Redeemer.

This, which hath been the common and ruling character of ſuch as have [m] *loved the Lord Jeſus in ſincerity*, from the firſt foundation of the chriſtian church to this day, makes an eſſential difference between them and all others, who, whatever good words and fair ſpeeches they may make uſe of to deceive the ſimple, and themſelves too the ſimpleſt of all, have no right to ſay, that *to them to live is Chriſt*, ſince, in reality, they *live only to themſelves*, *walk after their own luſts*, and lead a ſenſual and worldly life, ſuitably to that worldly and ſenſual ſpirit which reigns in them.

But then beſides this difference between true Chriſtians and falſe, which conſtitutes characters eſſentially oppoſite, there is a diverſity

[m] Eph. vi. 24.

verſity in the ſame character, ariſing from the different functions, offices, and ſtations of life, in which the followers of Chriſt are called to ſerve him. The unity of their character conſiſts in their unfeigned affection to their common Lord, approved by their ſincere obedience to all his laws and commandments; the variety of it in the ſeveral ways of expreſſing their affection, according to their ſeveral capacities of ſervice, their place and order in the church, and the ſpecial duties belonging thereto. Let us now therefore proceed to conſider this moſt excellent character in its principal views. And,

I. Let us conſider it as exemplified moſt eminently, and to the greateſt degree of perfection, in the *Apoſtles* of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. I ſay in the *Apoſtles*, and not in St. *Paul* only, becauſe in this and other places, where he ſpeaks directly in his own perſon, we ought to underſtand him as tacitly including the reſt of the *Apoſtles*, unleſs the thing ſpoken was manifeſtly peculiar to this *Apoſtle*, or the circumſtances of the place reſtrain it to him; eſpecially, when he ſometimes expreſsly joins them with himſelf, as particularly in the 1 *Cor.* iv. 9,—13. *God hath ſet forth us the Apoſtles laſt, as it were appointed unto death; for we are made a ſpectacle to the world, both to angels and men*, &c.

If we enquire what was the *office* of the *Apoſtles*, we ſhall find that they were choſen to plant the Religion of Chriſt in the world, and to be his witneſſes among all nations [n]. In diſcharging which high truſt they were *indefatigable*, and *faithful to the death*; and that which made them ſo was nothing elſe but *their great affection to their Lord and Maſter.*

1. *They were indefatigable in the duties of their function, and faithful to the death.* Their zeal in the cauſe of their crucified Maſter was without example. One thing did they deſire, and labour after, and that was to draw diſciples unto Chriſt; and if they did not *draw all men to him*, it was no fault of theirs, who were the beſt ſervants of the beſt Maſter that ever was. [o] *All things were by them counted but loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt*, the *ſavour* of which they endeavoured to ſpread in every place; travelling, as it is probable, while they were on land, from place to place on foot [p] like their Maſter before them, [q] *who went about doing good*; and, as it were, forgeting their own country, and their father's houſe, that they might carry the light of the Goſpel into diſtant regions of the earth. It might be truly ſaid of them, as of the *Phariſees* (but in a more honour-

[n] Mat. xxviii. 19. Acts i. 8. [o] Phil. iii 8.
[p] Acts xx. 13. [q] x. 38.

honourable ſenſe) that they *compaſſed ſea and land to make proſelytes*; not, as the *Phariſees* did, to ſome favourite and corrupt opinions of their own, but to a *doctrine* that was *according to godlineſs*. Great was their patience in ſuſtaining ſo many toils and difficulties; great their courage which encountered with the moſt univerſal and violent oppoſition, and overcame it. One would have thought, they had not the ſame appetites, and paſſions, and weakneſſes as other men, by the little regard which they ſhewed them. For Chriſt's ſake they [r] *took pleaſure in diſtreſſes*; [f] *rejoiced that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his name*; [t] endured *hunger, and thirſt, and nakedneſs*; *were buffeted, had no certain dwelling place, being reviled they bleſſed, being perſecuted they meekly ſuffered it, were made the filth of the world, and the off-ſcouring of all things.* Yet did [u] *none of theſe things move* them, *neither counted they their lives dear to them, that they might finiſh their courſe with joy, and the miniſtry which they had received of the Lord Jeſus, to teſtify the goſpel of the grace of God.* In the midſt of dangers, they went on in the ſteady proſecution of their deſign, and did not fail, nor were diſcouraged, *till they had ſet judgment in the earth*, and *the iſles* that were afar off had received the chriſtian law. They were the

[r] 2 Cor. xii. 10. [f] Acts v. 41. [t] 1 Cor. iv. 11, 12, 13. [u] Acts xx. 24.

perſons by whoſe miniſtry the world of mankind was prepared, and preſented as a kind of offering to God; and when this was done they thought their blood could not ſerve to a more honourable uſe than, like the wine or oil upon the antient ſacrifices, to be poured out as a *libation*, to render it more ſolemn and compleat. To this ſenſe is that of the *Apoſtle Paul*, Phil. ii. 17. *If I be offered upon the ſacrifice and ſervice of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all.* In a word, they, who while their Maſter was with them, were at ſtrife which of them ſhould be accounted the greateſt[w], after their Maſter was taken from them, ſeeming to contend for nothing ſo much as who ſhould deny himſelf moſt for his ſake, and be moſt conformable to him in his ſufferings and death.

2. *Their affection to their Maſter and nothing elſe, was that which made them willing to paſs through ſo many difficulties in propagating his Religion.* Their's were *the labours of love, which they ſhewed to his name.* We cannot reaſonably aſcribe their conduct to any other cauſe. Their ſeeming zeal for Chriſt could not proceed from a real concern for themſelves, and the advancement of their own by-ends, all which they evidently renounced. So far were they from ſeeking their own glory, that they ſtudiouſly declined any part of the honour that might redound to them from

[w] Luke xxii. 24.

from the wonderful works they performed; a remarkable inſtance of which we have in the cure of the [x] *lame man* who ſat at the gate of the temple aſking alms of them that entered in; for when, being healed of this malady, beyond his expectation, *he held* Peter *and* John, *and all the people ran together unto them greatly wondering*, *Peter* addreſſing himſelf unto them, ſaith, *Ye men of Iſrael, why marvel ye at this? Or why look ye ſo earneſtly upon us, as though by our own holineſs or power we had made this man to walk? The God of our fathers hath glorified his Son Jeſus; and his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man ſtrong whom ye ſee and know; yea, the faith, which is by him, hath given him this perfect ſoundneſs in the preſence of you all.* They did not diſcover the leaſt inclination to ſet up ſeperate parties and factions, who ſhould be called after their names, and by whom they might be admired and applauded. When ſomething of this humour began to ſhew itſelf in the Church of *Corinth*, (one ſaying he was of [y] *Paul*, another of *Apollos*, another of *Cephas*, and another of *Chriſt*) it was immediately diſcountenanced by the *Apoſtle Paul*, who aſks them, not without ſome warmth, *Is Chriſt divided? Was* Paul *crucified for you? Or were ye baptized into the name of* Paul? *Who is* Paul, *and who is* Apollos *but miniſters by whom*

[x] Acts. iii. 1, &c. [y] 1 Cor. i. 12, 13.

whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man [z]? As worldly wealth and power, the eaſe and pleaſures and pomp of life, were not actually the rewards of their labours, ſo they could never be ſo very ſimple as to think that they would be. They could not hope to conquer the world by a ſhew of contemning it, and, after that was done, to ſit down and enjoy the fruits of their conqueſt in a dominion eſtabliſhed upon the credulity of mankind, and in a life of ſenſual pleaſure and indulgence. Such imaginations as theſe were too romantick to enter into the heads of any men but of *common ſenſe*; and he muſt be a perfect ſtranger to the preaching and writings of the *Apoſtles* who will not allow them to have had that.

Should any charge them with a *love of ſingularity*, I would for once borrow what a late advocate * for infidelity hath offered to clear the *Deiſts* of the preſent age from a like imputation. " Would any man (*ſaith* " *he*) affect ſingularity in Religion when it " muſt expoſe him to the hatred of the " prieſt-hood, the bigots, and the immoral? " ——And when by this means one is look- " ed on as a monſter by ninety nine in a " hundred, and others ſcarce dare give him " any countenance? What hath this unhap- " py

[z] 1 Cor. iii. 5. * Author of an Addreſs to the Inhabitants of *London* and *Weſtminſter*, in relation to the Biſhop of *London*'s Paſtoral Letter.

" py man but conſcience to ſupport him?
" —— How can men quit thoſe opinions
" which they owe to the ſtrong prejudice of
" education, and the ſtronger of intereſt,
" for new opinions, without comparing the
" reaſonableneſs and fitneſs of one with the
" flaws and weakneſs of the other?" So far he. Let any impartial perſon apply this reaſoning to the caſe of the *Apoſtles*, and their exchanging the hope of a *temporal deliverer* (with which the whole nation of the *Jews* was obſtinately prepoſſeſſed) for faith in a *crucified Jeſus*, and it will appear to be as juſt and ſtrong, as it is weak and fallacious when uſed in defence of our modern unbelievers.

If it be ſaid, that the *Apoſtles* were influenced by a proſpect of *fame after death*, and of the power which their *ſucceſſors* might ſome time or other get into poſſeſſion of; that though they began with precepts of the greateſt humanity and tenderneſs, and doing the utmoſt good to mankind, though of ever ſo different perſuaſions, as it is neceſſary for them to do who deſign a new Religion, in oppoſition to Religions already eſtabliſhed; yet when people ſhould be drawn in by theſe plauſible pretences of humility and charity and diſregard to preſent things, and by the appearances of theſe virtues in the firſt preachers of Chriſtianity, they that followed might venture to throw off the maſque

and

and boldly to avow that ſpiritual tyranny and domination which the *Apoſtles* diſclaimed: if, I ſay, any ſuch thing as this ſhould be inſinuated, (as in fact it hath been †) the anſwer is eaſy, that we cannot, without the greateſt abſurdity, ſuppoſe that one generation of proud, ambitious, ſelfiſh, deſigning and worldly men ſhould be willing to live poor and deſpiſed, and bear all manner of indignities and reproaches, without betraying the leaſt deſire of revenge, only that a few men of the ſame ſpirit and temper in following generations (but not of the ſame kindred, or even the ſame nation) might have an opportunity to gratify all their worſt paſſions to the height. Men do not uſe to labour, merely that others (no more related to them than the moſt diſtant part of mankind) may enter into their labours. If they are deſireous of wealth and power, they are deſireous of them for themſelves, or for thoſe of their own family, and country, not for ſtangers, and that a very ſmall part of the world may be able to lord it over the reſt. And, as for *fame*, it would be a ſilly thing for any one to ſacrifice his reputation while living to the hope of an uncertain and uſeleſs reputation after death; which the *Apoſtles* too, if they were ſuch kind of men as this objection repreſents them, (*viz.* liars and impoſtors) had no

† Chriſtianity as old as the Creation, and the Characteriſticks.

no manner of reaſon to expect. " Can they " (ſaith the writer || I before mentioned, " when he is pleading the cauſe of the *De-* " *iſts*, can they) if they have any concern " for reputation after death, expect fair uſage " then, when they are ſure to be belied " while alive?" If we ſhould aſk ſuch queſtions as theſe concerning the *Apoſtles*, the argument would not be merely *ad hominem* (as it is uſually called; that is, an argument not to be anſwered by him againſt whom it is made uſe of, becauſe he cannot do it without contradicting his own principles and manner of reaſoning) but would in itſelf be ſolid and concluſive; for the *Apoſtles* of our Lord were, it is well known, [a] *hated of all men for his ſake*, as their Maſter had foretold them they would be, (eſpecially by ſuch ſort of perſons as this writer inſtances in) and their followers [b] *a ſect every where ſpoken againſt*.

It could not therefore be *their own name*, nor any *empire and intereſt of their own*, but the *kingdom of Chriſt* that the *Apoſtles* laboured ſo unweariedly to promote, that he might reign in every *nation*, and in every *heart*. It was not *ſelf-love* that was the ſpring of their activity, but the *love of Jeſus*, from which extraordinary affection for their Lord and Maſter we may (conſidering what it coſt

|| Author of the Addreſs, &c.

[a] Mat. x. 22.

[b] Acts xxviii. 22.

coſt them) infer, with ſome degree of aſſurance, that they ſtedfaſtly believed in him, and endeavoured to perſuade the world of the truth of no other things than they were very well ſatisfied of themſelves. For, if they had not believed that their Maſter was the *promiſed Meſſiah*, and his life and doctrine ſuch as they repreſented it; had they not believed that he wrought undoubted miracles during his life, roſe again from the dead, and aſcended up into heaven; in a word, that he *came from God, and went to God*, inſtead of having any reaſon to follow him in his life-time, and much more to be fond of his memory, and attached to his cauſe after his crucifixion, ſo far as for his ſake to part with all thoſe things which are eſteemed moſt valuable by the generality of mankind; inſtead of this, they would have had the greateſt cauſe to deteſt him as an *impoſtor*, by whom they had been miſerably befooled, and involved in difficulties and dangers, out of which they could have no way of eſcape but by forſaking the ſide they had choſen; and very juſtly would *Chriſt crucified* have been more *a ſtumbling-block* to them than to the other *Jews*, and greater *fooliſhneſs* than he was to the *Greeks* themſelves. The *Apoſtles* therefore did really believe the truth of thoſe things which they publiſhed concerning the doctrine of Chriſt, his life, and death, and reſurrection, the miſ-

ſion

ſion of the Holy Ghoſt as the effect and proof of his aſcenſion to the right hand of God, and the revelations they delivered as from him; and if they believed the truth of theſe things, they knew them to be true, becauſe theſe were not things which they received barely upon the report of others, but which they atteſted as matters of fact well known to themſelves, and muſt conſequently know to be falſe, if they were not certain of their truth.

The reſult is, that ſince it cannot be queſtioned that the *Apoſtles* had no other motive in being ſo zealouſly affected in the cauſe of Chriſtianity, as they appeared to be, but their love to the bleſſed Jeſus, and faith in him; beſides the benefit of their example both to miniſters and people, their conduct affords us an argument, next to demonſtrative, of the truth of our Religion. Their whole hiſtory proclaims that they were not deceivers, (foraſmuch as ſuch perſons have always ſome by-ends of their own to ſerve which the *Apoſtles* had not) and the nature and circumſtances of the caſe prove that they could not be deceived; and if they were not deceived themſelves, and did not knowingly deceive others, we are not deceived, when we believe on Chriſt through their word.

Having thus taken a view of the character in the text as exemplified moſt eminently, and

and to the greateſt degree of perfection, in the *Apoſtles* of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, let us now paſs on,

II. To conſider the ſame excellent character as verified in the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt, in every age of the church, and worthy of their higheſt ambition, and their utmoſt care to excel in it. There is no one who *ſerves God with his ſpirit in the Goſpel of his Son* but may ſay for himſelf, in that capacity and relation, *to me to live is Chriſt.* But then we are to obſerve, that though all have purchaſed to themſelves a good degree, in this reſpect, yet not the very ſame degree, (of which this ſingle conſideration is proof ſufficient, that the *love of Chriſt* where it is equally ſincere, is not equally ſtrong) nor have any acquited themſelves ſo well, but they may be ſuppoſed capable of doing better. And, for this reaſon, I ſhall in my inlargement on this character take the liberty to mention ſome things which do not ſo properly belong to the *eſſence* of it, as to its *perfection*, and rather expreſs what is to be *deſired*, and what the Miniſters of *Chriſt* ſhould *labour after*, than what many of them have *actually attained to.* The main things which enter into this extenſive character may be comprized under theſe three heads, viz. that every faithful Miniſter makes it the principal ſcope and buſineſs of his life to promote the

the honour and intereſt of his Redeemer, more particularly in the ſalvation of thoſe ſouls that are commited to his charge—that in preaching the Goſpel, and in all the other parts of his miniſterial conduct and labours, he follows that method which he apprehends to be beſt adapted to the attainment of this glorious end—and, finally, that he eſteems the approbation of his Lord, by whom he was bought, and is imployed, an ample recompence for all the diſcouragements and ſelf-denial he can undergo in his ſervice.

1. *A faithful Miniſter of Chriſt will make it the principal ſcope and buſineſs of his life to promote the honour and intereſt of his Redeemer, more particularly in the ſalvation of thoſe ſouls that are commited to his charge.* I believe I need not add, that when we ſpeak of the honour of Chriſt as the end of our miniſterial labours, we are to underſtand it in connection with the glory of God, to which that of Chriſt as Mediator hath its ultimate reference. [c] *If every knee muſt bow to the name of Jeſus, and every tongue confeſs that he is Lord*, it is to be done *to the glory of God the Father*, to whom [d] *glory is aſcribed to be in the church by Chriſt Jeſus, throughout all ages, world without end.* We do not here conſider the *Word*, abſtractly, [e] *that was in the begining with God, and was God*; but

[c] Phil. ii. 10, 11. [d] Eph. iii. 21. [e] John i. 1, 2.

we conſider *Chriſt* as the [f] *Word made fleſh*, for the redemption of the world, as the [g] *anointed of God*, the *one mediator between God and man*, the [h] *one Lord*, and *head*, and *ſaviour of his body the church*; under which characters they for whom he mediates, the ſubjects of his kingdom, his redeemed ones, owe, and ſhould delightfully pay him all the returns of praiſe and gratitude and love, the homage of their hearts, and the obedience of their lives.

We the Miniſters of Chriſt are under ſpecial obligations to ſeek his honour and intereſt, in regard we are the *meſſengers of Chriſt*, his *ſervants* in a peculiar, and appropriate ſenſe. And what is our meſſage, but [i] *to beſeech ſinners in Chriſt's ſtead, to be reconciled unto God?* What is our office and imployment but, like the angels though in a different way from them, to [k] *miniſter to thoſe who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation*; and to do, in ſome ſenſe, what the *fore-runner* of the *Meſſiah* did, [l] *make ready a people, prepared for the Lord?* To promote the Religion of the bleſſed Jeſus both in the knowledge and practice of it, which is no other than the *kingdom of God among men?* To explain the method of reconciliation, and the bleſſings and terms of the Goſpel covenant? To perſuade thoſe

[f] John i. 14. [g] 1 Tim. ii. 5. [h] Eph. iv. 5. Col. i. 18. Eph. v. 23. [i] 2 Cor. v. 20. [k] Heb. i. 14. [l] Luke i. 17.

thoſe who make a profeſſion of Chriſtianity to live agreeably to their profeſſion, that they may be the *diſciples of Chriſt indeed?* To be guides to others in the paths of *truth*, and *peace*, and *holineſs*, and to aſſiſt them in acquiring all thoſe divine virtues and qualifications which are neceſſary to prepare them for a part in the heavenly felicity? This is what we are to endeavour with the greateſt fervency and application of mind. Not to teach men how to *diſpute* and *wrangle*, but to *live well*; not to bring them over to any particular perſuaſion, and to contend blindly and fiercely for that, as if they muſt then be good Chriſtians of courſe, but to gain them to Chriſt, and to the love of univerſal goodneſs. We muſt not [m]*preach ourſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* We muſt not ſuffer our humours and paſſions, our pride, and envy, and covetouſneſs to mingle with and corrupt the *ſingleneſs* of our intention for the honour of the Redeemer, which ought to ſwallow up all theſe. We ſhould abhor all private, or party views; be alike indifferent to our own ſecular intereſt, and to the intereſt of any ſect or denomination of Chriſtians whatſoever, any further than as by upholding and promoting that we conſult the intereſt of Chriſt, and of true ſubſtantial Religion. For in reality, all other things, compared with this, are, whatever ſome may think, too

[m] 2 Cor. iv. 5.

inconſiderable to be worth minding, and much more to be worth our ſtriving about them.

We are not to flatter the vices, or comply with the follies and humours of our people in things prejudicial to Religion, any more than to ſtudy how to gratify our own. We are, indeed, to pleaſe [n] *all men for their good, to edification*; but no man for fear of his diſpleaſure, and to ſerve any little purpoſes of our own; for, if we thus pleaſe man, how are we the ſervants of Chriſt [o]? In a word, if we ſeek glory, it muſt be that which flows from our being *workers together* [p] with the Son of God in the recovery of a loſt world. And, in truth, here alone, and in other inſtances of doing good, ambition is a virtue; here alone is it capable of meeting with ſatisfaction. It is a glorious thing to be imployed by divine Providence in reſcuing the lives and liberties of our fellow-creatures when in danger, to have *the bleſſing of thoſe that were ready to periſh come upon us*, to ſave men from bitter want, and lawleſs oppreſſion. It is ſtill more glorious to be an inſtrument of divine Grace in delivering ſouls from bondage and death, and conducting them, in the way of righteouſneſs, to honour and immortality. Herein we at once act for ourſelves, for the nobleſt intereſt of man-

[n] Rom. xv. 2. 1 Cor. x. 33. [o] Gal. i. 10.
[p] 2 Cor. vi. 1.

mankind, for the honour of the Redeemer, and for the glory of God; for the cauſe of holineſs is the cauſe of all theſe. In particular, we cannot ſerve Chriſt more acceptably than by being ſerviceable to the ſouls of men, to *inſtruct*, to *reſtore*, to *confirm*, to *edify*, and to *comfort* them. He himſelf hath made this the teſt of our love to him; [q] *Simon ſon of Jonas, loveſt thou me? Peter* anſwering, *Lord, thou knoweſt all things, thou knoweſt that I love thee*, he ſaith unto him, *feed my ſheep.* He himſelf is the great lover of ſouls, for theſe *he laid down his life* [r]; theſe are the *flock and church of God* which *he purchaſed with his own blood* [s], entruſting the care and overſight of them to us. When theſe are ſaved he *ſeeth of the travel of his ſoul and is ſatisfied* [t]; and denonſtrates the *power of his grace* in their converſion and final perſeverance, as in *making his ſoul an offering for their ſins*, he ſhewed the unparalleled greatneſs of his love.

2. *In preaching the Goſpel, and in all the other parts of his miniſterial conduct and labours, a faithful ſervant of Chriſt will think himſelf bound to follow that method which he apprehends to be beſt adapted to anſwer the glorious end now mentioned.* And what is this method? Give me leave to be your remembrancer in a few things.

[q] John xxi. 17. [r] John x. 11.
[s] Acts xx. 28. [t] Iſai. liii. 11.

We are at proper times, and as our ſubject occaſionally leads us, *to ſet the evidences of the Chriſtian Religion* before our hearers, in the beſt and plaineſt manner we are able; that their faith may not be the mere reſult of education, but a reaſonable and intelligent act, which, I will venture to ſay, is the faith which, being attended with a ſuita-life, does moſt honour to Chriſt in the view of the world, and is moſt becoming reaſonable creatures, as men are.

We ſhould take all opportunities of ſhewing them *the excellency of the doctrines and precepts of our holy Religion*, (which by the way, makes a part of the proof of its truth) and obſerving to them how admirably they all conſpire in one great end, viz. the *glory of God* and the *perfection*, and *happineſs of man*. It ſhould be our endeavour to convince them of the *reaſonableneſs* of thoſe duties that are required of them, and the *goodneſs of God* in requiring them; leading them to take notice how all thoſe rules of behaviour which *Reaſon* hath, or with due care might have found out, are delivered with much greater advantage in the *ſacred writings*; and that whatever duties and appointments are peculiar to the Chriſtian Inſtitution, they are not therefore arbitrary, unreaſonable injunctions, but either naturally ariſe out of thoſe circumſtances which we are in, as fallen creatures

tures reſtored by the mediation of Chriſt to an aſſurance of the full favour of God, and everlaſting bleſſedneſs, (ſuch as *faith* and *truſt* in the *Mediator*, and *love* to him) or are excellently fited, as means, to facilitate the practice of moral and chriſtian virtues, and our continual progreſs and improvement in them, of which kind the *Lord*'s-*Day* and the *Lord*'s-*Supper* are eminent inſtances. It is thus we are moſt likely to bring men to that obedience of the Goſpel which will be uniform and conſtant, delightful to themſelves, acceptable to God, and for the credit of their Religion, and its divine Author. It became Chriſt as a *lawgiver* to *teach with authority*, leting men know what God required of them, and what they, according to their behaviour might expect from God, without entering into the particular reaſons of his commands, and proving the divine original of his doctrine from a diſtinct conſideration of its nature and tendency, though he himſelf hints at this. And much the ſame method is taken in thoſe ſacred writings by which the chriſtian revelation is conveyed down to us. The doctrine they contain is perfectly *reaſonable*, but there is very little *reaſoning* upon it. This part is left to thoſe who are only the *expounders* of the *ſcripture-revelation*, and who owe it to the *author of their faith*, to the *faith itſelf*, and to *them that believe*, to

trace and mark out those footsteps of the *divine holiness*, *wisdom*, and *goodness* that are so conspicuous in the frame of our Religion.

We should be very careful also to preach nothing but the *pure uncorrupted doctrine of Jesus Christ*; not mixing what is *human* and sometimes worse, with what is *divine*. No good man will knowingly do this, but he may do it through inadvertency, and prepossession. He may have his favourite opinions which he never thoroughly tried by the standard of scripture; he may have taken things too much upon trust, and substituted the interpretations of scripture by fallible men in the room of the scripture doctrines themselves. Hath he *searched the scriptures diligently*, and that he might have *the mind of Christ* in them? Hath he laid aside all prejudice, as far as the weakness of human nature in this state of imperfection will admit of it? Hath he proceeded with the same care, and in the same method, in order to come at the right meaning of the *inspired scriptures*, that are used in setling the sense of other authors, especially those that are *antient*, *viz.* considering the occasion, scope and connection of the discourse, comparing one part with another, making plainer and more numerous passages the rule by which to understand those that are more obscure, and fewer; and finally, judging of the exact import of expressions and phrases by

by the cuſtoms that obtained when and where the books were written, and the idioms or manners of ſpeaking which the writers followed; and not according to the weight and value which they would bear in our times and language; which *one rule* is of ſuch importance that, if it had been always obſerved I much doubt ſome opinions had never been heard of which make a conſiderable figure in many *modern Syſtems of Divinity?* If he hath neglected this, he hath not diſcharged his *whole duty* in this particular. Not that we are, without any reaſon for it, to ſuſpect the truth of thoſe things which we have been taught; and much leſs to think the worſe of them becauſe they are commonly taught and believed. But if on the one hand we ought not to ſuſpect received opinions without reaſon, no more ought we, on the other, to perſiſt in the belief of them without it; when we have the *Bible* in our hands and, after we have taken the beſt care we can to underſtand that ſacred Book, ſhall be better able to judge, (for ourſelves I mean) which among the ſeveral contending parties of Chriſtians come neareſt to their common rule; or at leaſt ſhall be juſtified to our own minds, and to the truth, if it ſhould prove that we have judged wrong; always remembering, that a pure and humble mind equally remote from every extreme, is the beſt prepared for finding out the truth, and

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for teaching it when found; and that together with these commendable dispositions of mind we ought to join our earnest prayers to the *Father of lights* for his heavenly illumination; which, perhaps, *we* have somewhat more reason to expect than other men, as well as to be more sollicitously concerned about it; because not only our own personal conduct, but that of others may in some measure depend upon the notions we entertain. If a *private christian* be in an error, it is not of so much consequence, as long as it hath no ill effect upon his life, and so goes no further than a mistake in his own thoughts; while a *Minister*, whose integrity we will suppose secures him from the pernicious influence of an erronious opinion, may, by propagating that opinion, *undesignedly* lead others into some wrong practice, or confirm them in it, who have not the same honest disposition that he himself hath.

That we may be more cautious how we advance any doctrines, without examining whether they are a part of the true *original scheme* of Christianity, let us consider, that while we tie ourselves down to any *human Creeds* and *Confessions*, and *Chatechisms*, it is very possible that some part of what we are building upon the common *foundation* may be only *hay and stubble* [u], not, what we take it for, *gold and silver*; and that in this case though

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[u] 1 Cor. iii. 12, &c.

we ourſelves may be *ſaved*, having *meant well*, yet *our works ſhall be burnt up*; and we go without that *praiſe from God* which we ſhould have had, if we had ſought his will more at his own mouth, whether we had, or had not, always taken it right. The cloſer we keep to the purity and ſimplicity of the Goſpel, ſo much the more good is the Goſpel, in our hands, likely to do; as that food and medicine is moſt wholeſome which hath nothing foreign and improper mixed with it. And I leave it to be conſidered, whether one way of preſerving the ſimplicity of *ſcripture-doctrines* may not be, either not to depart from the *language* in which the *Holy Ghoſt* hath ſeen fit to deliver them; or, when we do, to expreſs ourſelves in the moſt *intelligible* words, and neareſt reſembling the ſimplicity of the ſcriptures; ſtudiouſly avoiding the obſcure *terms*, and perplexed and ſubtil *diſtinctions*, and endleſs *queſtions* of the *ſchools*, which are of no profit, but to the ſubverting of thoſe that deal in them.

Again, if we would be like St. *Paul*, we muſt not *ſhun to declare the whole counſel of God*; for ſo he ſaith of himſelf, that he did not, in his moſt inſtructive and moving diſcourſe to the *Elders of Epheſus*. And what this means is beſt explained by another expreſſion in the ſame diſcourſe, that he had not *kept back any thing that was profitable for them, teſtifying to the* Jews, *and alſo to the* Greeks,

Greeks, *repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ* [w]. Let this be our rule. Let us always consider what is *profitable* for our hearers; of which kind we may be sure every thing is that is a part of *repentance towards God*, and of that *faith in our Lord Jesus Christ* without which no man can be saved. Nothing of this nature should be withheld upon any account whatsoever. Nothing that is necessary to *faith*, and *holiness* should be left unexplained and unenforced; for this would be one way *of* [x] *handling the word of God deceitfully*, suppressing that part of it which would be unacceptable, and [y] *speaking only smooth things*; at most, contenting ourselves with general invectives against sin, and exhortations and persuasives to a holy life, without doing any thing to disturb that false peace in which so many souls lull themselves asleep to their own undoing; by which means, instead of [z] *commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God*, we should only get in favour with their lusts. This maiming the word of God is next a-kin to adulterating it, and of almost as fatal consequence to the souls of men. As for *doubtful opinions*, they should be always given for what they are, and seldom have any place in our Discourses. And where things are of *less importance*, how well

[w] Acts xx. 20, 21. [x] 2 Cor. iv. 2.
[y] Isai. xxx. 10. [z] 2 Cor. iv. 2.

well perſuaded ſoever we may be in our own minds of their truth, they ſhould not have more ſtreſs laid upon them than they will warrant, nor be *violently* and *unſeaſonably* urged upon thoſe who are in contrary opinions; but *inſinuated* by little and little as they can bear, it being a maxim of *chriſtian* as well as worldly *prudence*, that *the end is always to regulate the means*; and conſequently, the end of our preaching being [a] *the profit of many that they may be ſaved*, we ought to avoid whatever would deprive us of this moſt deſireable fruit of all our labours.

In the *manner* of preaching that way is undoubtedly to be prefered which is beſt ſuited to *enlighten the underſtanding*, and to *affect, and reform the heart*; ſuch a *plainneſs of ſpeech*, ſuch an *eaſy, and apparent method* in dividing a Diſcourſe, ſuch a *familiar way of reaſoning*, as will ſhew that we do not neglect the *meaneſt* of our hearers; and withal, ſuch a *decency*, *propriety*, and *juſtneſs* as cannot be condemned by the moſt judicious.

And now I would aſk, what further is neceſſary to the *preaching of Chriſt?* For my part, I freely own that I can underſtand nothing elſe *by preaching of Chriſt* than preaching the *Religion of Chriſt*, as it hath been now explained. If we conſider Chriſt as the Author of our Religion, we cannot any other way give men ſo high a notion of him as by

[a] 1 Cor. x. 33.

by teaching them to conceive moſt honourably of that; which, I hope, is not done by telling them that the *doctrines* and *precepts* of the Goſpel are irreconcileable to *Reaſon*, and overthrow all our natural notions of things; but, on the contrary, by proving that no man who makes a right uſe of his *Reaſon* can refuſe his aſſent to the *Chriſtian Revelation*, or find fault with it; its *precepts* having ſo manifeſt a tendency to ſecure the happineſs of mankind, and its *doctrines* to give weight and efficacy to its *precepts*; and neither of them being unworthy to come from the fountain of all truth and perfection. And what then ſhould ſet ſome men ſo much againſt the uſe of *Reaſon* in Religion, and be the ground not only of their ſeeming contempt, but real hatred and dread of it? Beſides a conſciouſneſs that their notions will not bear this trial (I do not mean only of *Reaſon ſeparate from Scripture*, but of *Scripture itſelf* interpreted by thoſe *rules* which common *Reaſon* directs to) other cauſes might be given of this; among which we may reckon theſe two following, *viz.* that the fanciful and myſtical way of preaching, in which *any doctrine* may be fetched out of *any text*, is at the ſame time the eaſieſt for the preacher and moſt acceptable to the generality of hearers; and that *the work of converſion*, as they explain it, is of ſuch a nature, that *Reaſon* and *Conſideration* have little

tle or no real influence upon it; tho', by the way, the excellency of the Chriſtian Religion does not conſiſt only in the excellency of its *end*, the *glory of God in the reſtoration of man to his image and favour*, but likewiſe of the *means* employed for the accompliſhment of this *end*; as the excellency of theſe means muſt appear in their proper ſubſerviency to the end deſigned by them, and not barely in their being the *condition* without which God will not work grace in the ſoul. It is very true, *the excellency of the power* is more viſibly of God when the means contribute nothing to the effect; as in the inſtance of the blind man, in curing whom our bleſſed Saviour did nothing but [b] *anoint his eyes with clay*, after he had ſpit upon it: but as we cannot therefore ſay that clay and ſpittle are an excellent remedy for blindneſs, ſo neither would it be proper to ſay of the Faith of the Goſpel that it is an admirable means of purifying the heart, and making men *partakers of a divine nature*, if an *immediate* and *irreſiſtible* operation of the *Holy Spirit* did *all*, and *faith*, as a *moral cauſe* or *motive*, did *nothing*. And if it be granted, that there is a real ſanctifying virtue in the Goſpel, under the influences of the Holy Spirit, this virtue muſt proceed from a fitneſs in the doctrines and precepts of the Goſpel to beget in us the love of God, and of thoſe qualities and actions that will render us like God;

[b] John ix. 6.

God ; which love muſt be the effect of a conviction that the things which the Goſpel aſcribes to God as adorable perfections, and requires of man in order to his reſembling God, are in their own nature lovely and excellent. Even the *promiſes* and *threatenings* of the Goſpel do not, perhaps, ſo *directly* influence the converſion of the heart to God, and our endeavours after holineſs ; but rather *indirectly*, as they work upon our paſſions, and thereby engage us to conſider more ſeriouſly and attentively than we ſhould otherwiſe do, the reaſonableneſs of religion, the intrinſick value and native beauty of holineſs, and great excellence of all thoſe divine and ſpiritual attainments which Chriſtianity obliges us to aſpire after.

And ſince Chriſt is the glorious ſubject of the Goſpel revelation as well as the divine author of it, he that goes over all the parts of this revelation, and thoſe oftenеſt which are moſt eſſential, and uſeful, cannot avoid frequently ſpeaking of *Jeſus Chriſt*, his *Perſon* and *Offices*, his *Life* and *Death*, his *Humiliation* and *Exaltation*, together with his moſt *aſtoniſhing affection* to the children of men manifeſted in all theſe ; and, if he loves his Subject, he will diſcourſe of theſe things with pleaſure, take every opportunity of returning to them, fix his admiring thoughts upon them, and recommend them to the meditations of others ; preſs the duties of the chriſtian life from theſe motives, and not fail

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to take notice of the end of all that Chriſt did, and ſuffered, and taught upon earth, and is now doing in heaven, namely, to turn men from ſin to holineſs, and, by faith and holineſs, unto God. If there be any who are not contented with all this, but will needs have more, tho' not contained in ſcripture, at leaſt according to our notion of things, and even inconſiſtent with the doctrine taught there, we muſt beg their excuſe, if we do not leave our own way for theirs, till we ſee better reaſon for it. We readily agree with them, that he is the beſt *Preacher of Chriſt* whoſe way of preaching is beſt fited to convince men of their *need of Chriſt*, and to bring them to *truſt* in him, and depend upon him for *grace* and *glory*, and to *eſteem* and *love* him. But then no ſerious chriſtian will think that man to have a regular truſt in Chriſt, who truſts him for what he never promiſed, and even againſt the conſtant tenor of his promiſes and declarations; or that he hath a true eſteem and love of Chriſt, who, while he talks in a high ſtrain of the lovelineſs of his *perſon*, neglects to imitate the virtues of his *divine life*; and, inſtead of [b] *keeping his commandments*, which is the rule that Chriſt himſelf hath given us to judge of our love by, is in raptures to think that Chriſt hath left *nothing* for *ſome men* to do, but confidently to believe that he hath done

[b] John xiv. 21.

all for them. Unhappy ſouls, who have *ſo learned Chriſt*; ſo as St. *Paul* tells the *Epheſians* [c] they had *not learned him, if they had been taught by him as the truth is in Jeſus.* The *Epheſians* had not learned Chriſt, ſo as to be guilty of the immoralities [d] which the *Apoſtle* had before mentioned; which they will do well to conſider, who fancy themſelves to have learned Chriſt better than other people, and to have a better notion of *juſtifying faith*, becauſe they have a more contemptible one of *good works.*

In the other parts of his miniſterial office and conduct, the perſon I am now deſcribing will take care that all things in the worſhip of God [e] *be done decently and in order.* In *Prayer* and the *Adminiſtration of the Sacraments*, he will be deſirous of performing his part ſo as to ſecure the reverence due to the inſtitutions and offices of Religion, and to excite and keep up a ſpirit of piety, and a *ſober rational* devotion. He will alſo frame his behaviour at other times and places, as well as *in the houſe of God*, after ſuch a manner, that the prejudices too commonly taken up againſt Religion may be removed, and he may gain a place in the affections of thoſe that know him both for *himſelf* and *that.* He will conſider that as it is his duty earneſtly to exhort men to a holy and heavenly life, to a con-

[c] Eph. iv. 20, 21. [d] Ver. 17, 18, 19.
[e] 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

a contempt of the world, and the greateſt ſincerity and ſimplicity in all their actions, and to uſe all the arts of perſuaſion for the effecting this end, ſo he cannot be diſpenſed with from being *an example to the flock* of theſe and all other chriſtian virtues, without which, nothing that he can ſay will be much regarded. He will, in a particular manner, reflect on the anſwer of our bleſſed Saviour to that queſtion, [f] *who is the greateſt in the kingdom of heaven?* Not the moſt wealthy, or powerful, or learned; not thoſe who can eaſieſt carry any point by their arts of managing the people, but the moſt humble; *whoſoever ſhall humble himſelf as this little child, the ſame is greateſt in the kingdom of heaven.* He will not [g] *ſtrive, but be gentle to all men, apter to teach* and reaſon, than, where argument fails, to ſupply the place of it with uncharitable cenſures; *in meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves, if God peradventure will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth.* Obſerve, it is ſaid, *if God will give them repentance*, that is, if the methods which God hath appointed will work repentance, not if they may be made to repent of their errors by being made to ſuffer for them. After all, *charity is the greateſt friend of truth, and truth of charity.* Truth is ſooneſt found by the charitable, were it only for this reaſon

[f] Mat. xviii. 1, 4. [g] 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.

ſon that they have a greater openneſs of mind than other men; and the charitable have uſually moſt ſucceſs in defending the cauſe of truth.

3. *A faithful Miniſter will eſteem the approbation of his Lord, that bought him, and by whom he is imployed, an ample recompence for all the diſcouragements and ſelf-denial he can undergo in his ſervice.* *Great things* he muſt neither ſeek, nor expect, (in this world I mean, where indeed the greateſt things are but little to a great mind, and in compariſon of the infinitely greater things above) difficulties and oppoſition he may and muſt expect without ſeeking. The ſtated and ordinary duties of his function, to be rightly performed, will coſt him much care and watchfulneſs and pains, tho' his love to Chriſt, and to the ſouls of men will make his work much eaſier than it would otherwiſe be; and, perhaps, after all his prayers and labours, he may have little ſucceſs. The weakneſſes and miſtakes of good men themſelves may occaſion him ſome trouble, and the obſtinacy and blindneſs of others who hate to be reformed a great deal more. He may loſe the friendſhip of ſome by thoſe very things which ought to fix him the deeper in their eſteem; they may become [h] *his enemies becauſe he tells them the truth.* He may be evil ſpoken of, and faults found with his *preaching*, his *temper*,

[h] Gal. iv. 16.

per, his *converſation*. When this is the caſe, he ſhould be ſo much his *own friend* as to examine whether he hath given any ground for theſe cenſures, and to deal ſincerely with himſelf, not juſtifying or ſparing any faults becauſe they are his own. But if, allowance being made for the common failings of humanity, he ſtands acquitted to his own mind, he need not doubt of his being accepted of Chriſt, *who judgeth not as man judgeth*. It is enough that his Saviour hath promiſed that he *will be* with his faithful ſervants in the miniſtry [i] *to the end of the world*; it is enough that he will [k] *ſtand by them and ſtrengthen them*; and in the laſt general aſſembly will pronounce that welcome ſentence, [l] *well done thou good and faithful ſervant, thou haſt been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

III. Let us now, in the laſt place, conſider this character as that by which all the genuine profeſſors of the Goſpel are at preſent diſtinguiſhed, and will hereafter be known, from all others. The time will allow me to do little more than juſt give you a few hints on this ſubject.

[i] Mat. xxviii. 20. [k] 2 Tim. iv. 17.
[l] Mat. xxv. 21.

1. *They reckon themſelves obliged to devote all their talents, their wealth, power, intereſt, to the advancement of Chriſt's kingdom in the world.* Chriſt to them is *all*; and therefore *their all* is laid at the feet of Chriſt. Whatever influence they have in their own families, in the civil ſociety, or in the church of God, they are pleaſed with it chiefly on this account that it gives them an opportunity of ſupporting and countenancing true Religion and Virtue; as well knowing that what they do for theſe is ſo much done for their Redeemer; that he puts it on his account, and will repay it, although he might ſay unto them, *that they owe him their own ſelves.* O how were it to be wiſhed that all the profeſſors of the Goſpel were of this ſpirit; and that true chriſtians did not ſometimes forget themſelves, and their Saviour, and ſuffer their zeal to be too much damped by the world, and the bad examples they meet with in it! St. *Paul* complains of a coldneſs that had ſeized ſome chriſtians among whom he converſed, who [m] *ſought their own things and not the things of Jeſus Chriſt.* I fear, the ſame witneſs would be as true of a great many now as it was then. May I not ſay, of many more, and in a much greater degree?

We have had *Inquiry* upon *Inquiry* concerning *the Decay of the Diſſenting Intereſt*, and the *Cauſes* of it. Not to aſk in what reſpects this

[m] Phil. ii. 21.

this Intereſt is leſs flouriſhing than it *hath been*, which is the thing meant by the *Decay* of it, no one will deny that it is not ſo flouriſhing, on more accounts than one, as it *might be*. And where ſhall we lay the fault of this? On Miniſters only? And from whom are we to expect the remedy? Wholly from them too? The former would not be doing them juſtice; and the latter would be doing them too much honour. God grant that wherein ſoever Miniſters have been defective in their duty, or done any thing to the diſſervice of Religion (as particularly in contributing to deſtroy, or not contributing as they ought to have done to preſerve and cultivate, that *unity and affection* on which both the credit and the ſtrength of any religious intereſt do ſo much depend) they may ſeriouſly think of it, mend what hath been amiſs, and be wiſer for the time to come. But after Miniſters have taken their ſhare of the blame, there will I doubt, be more than enough left for the People too. Let thoſe that are concerned lay their hands on their hearts, and ſay, whether they have not grown cold and indifferent to *Nonconformity*, and in ſome company been aſhamed to be known for *Diſſenters*, only becauſe the *favours* and *preferments*, of the world, and *publick faſhion* are not on this ſide; and whether they do not think that others have forſaken us quite, for no other reaſon than this? The duty of ſuch perſons

is to mortify their love of the world, and to make it a rule to themſelves (according to the laudable reſolution of a very worthy man) *never to do that for preferment, or any temporal conſideration, which they would ſcruple doing without.* Let them conſider, whether they have been ſo tender as they ſhould of the reputation of ſuch Miniſters as have not had the happineſs to pleaſe thoſe *whoſe perſons they have in admiration?* Whether they have not been too eaſy to receive impreſſions, and take up reports to their diſadvantage, and, inſtead of promoting their uſefulneſs, hindered it? Let them confeſs, whether in the ſeveral ſteps of life, and in the deſigns they form and purſue they are not more animated than they ſhould be by private and preſent views, and abundantly leſs than they ought by a publick ſpirit, and the generous and divine temper of Chriſtianity? Particularly, in their own alliances, or in the diſpoſal of children in *trades* and *profeſſions*, or in *marriage*, which is the firſt thing in queſtion, the chief determining point? Is it *Religion* or the *World?* Do not too many, after they have inſtructed their children in their education to be careful of their ſouls in the firſt place, as good as tell them by having ſo little regard to this point themſelves, that they ſhould take no notice of what they have been taught? Do they not ſeem to think that no expences turn to leſs account than thoſe which are laid

laid out upon the occaſions of charity and piety? I ſpeak not of all; for, bleſſed be God, we have *ſome*, I truſt *many*, eminent examples of another kind, by whom the credit of Religion is in ſome meaſure redeemed and its intereſt heartily eſpouſed. Theſe declare by their actions that nothing is ſo dear to them as the *name and honour of Chriſt*, and that where theſe are concerned they are determined to make every thing elſe ſtoop, that is of private conſideration.

2. *The genuine profeſſors of Chriſtianity prove their claim to this character by placing moſt of their eſteem and affection where they think they diſcern moſt of Chriſt.* By this meaſure they regulate their judgment both of *perſons* and *parties*. They love their Redeemer in his image, and whereſoever they find that, they can reſpect and own it, though in thoſe of very different perſuaſions from themſelves. In imitation of their great pattern, they embrace all mankind with a love of *benevolence*, or good-will, and all that love Chriſt with a love of *complacency* and *eſteem*, taking pleaſure in their gifts and graces, and, with thankfulneſs to God, acknowledging the benefit of their examples. Among the different forms and denominations which unhappily divide the chriſtian world, they take their lot with that which in their judgment comes neareſt the *ſcripture model*, not entering however (unleſs it be without knowing

ing it, and when they are impoſed upon by miſrepreſentations of perſons and things) into a *party-ſpirit*, and into meaſures that are detrimental to the common intereſt of true Chriſtianity. While they join in communion with this or that *particular church*, they do not forget that they are members of the *church catholick*, and indiſpenſably bound to ſeek the general credit and proſperity of *that*. I hope it will not be imputed to any *ſide views* when I add,

3. *True chriſtians will be taught by their regard to Chriſt what ſort of reſpect and treatment they owe to his Miniſters.* That as on the one hand they are not to build their faith on the *authority of men*, whatever opinion they may have of their knowledge and integrity, ſo on the other they are *to eſteem* all faithful Miniſters [n] *very highly in love for their work's ſake*, and for *his* ſake whoſe ſervants they are. Thoſe that are *Paſtors according to God's own heart* will be afraid of claiming a power over the underſtandings and conſciences of men which they cannot exerciſe without invading the rights of the author of our faith, the *one Maſter* [o] and *Lawgiver*; nor others ſubmit to without betraying the rights and liberties of the Chriſtian Church. People are to judge for themſelves; we always ſuppoſe this in appealing to the ſcripture for the truth of all that we deliver as belong-

[n] 1 Theſ. v. 13. [o] Mat. xxiii. 8.

belonging to *faith* or *practice*; for to what purpose is this appeal made if people are not permited *to search the scriptures*, to see whether things are so as they are represented? But then as long as a Minister keeps within his proper bounds, and appears to *watch for souls* as one that knows [p] *he must give an account*, he may reasonably expect not only the good wishes but the encouragement and assistance of all that are well affected to the cause of their common Lord. They ought in no case to weaken his hands, and by expressing a contempt for his person and ministrations, to lessen his capacity of doing good. Ministers being men of *like passions* and infirmities with others, the people should not raise their demands too high; especially, when they themselves so often need pardon for the defects they are guilty of in the duties of their several stations. Let them think of that of our Saviour, [q] *with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.* Are the sentiments of your Minister in some things different from yours? Yet certainly, that which recommends him to the approbation of his *Lord and Master* ought not to deprive him of the esteem and affection of his *hearers*. Now, among other things, the dilligence and care of a Minister to know *the mind of Christ*, and to preach nothing else but that, must make him stand higher in his favour; and therefore

[p] Heb. xiii. 17. [q] Mat. vii. 2.

fore though the effect of this his pious endeavour ſhould be his not agreeing in every point with *Eſtabliſhed Syſtems*, this inſtead of giving his People, or any others, a worſe notion of him ſhould diſpoſe them to weigh impartially what he hath to offer in his own defence, and (as it may prove) in the defence of the truth too; or to bear with him if after all they cannot be of his mind, as long as he ſhews himſelf one of a modeſt and peaceable ſpirit, and to act from conſcience, and not from a levity of mind, or an affection of ſingularity.

And now, what remains but that we all of us reſolve that by divine aſſiſtance we will make this character our own, and, by ſtriving after an eminence in it, put it out of diſpute that it is ſo, that to us *to live ſhall be Chriſt*; not barely to *talk*, but to *live*; that we will live to his *honour*, and be ready to die for his *truth?* And let us remember, that no one can pretend to this who leads an *unholy life*; which is at once an open contradiction to the *precepts* of Chriſt, to the *example* of his life, and the *deſign* of his death. A holy life is the greateſt commendation to our Religion, and an unholy one (to thoſe that judge of a Religion by the converſation and manners of its profeſſors) the greateſt reproach and diſgrace. Let us, my brethren, whether Miniſters or People, [r] *conſider one another, to provoke unto love,*

[r] Heb. x. 24.

love, and to good works. Let us, as to the *ſpirit* of Piety, (whatever we may think of ſome of the *particular inſtances* in which it expreſt itſelf) form ourſelves upon the example of the *primitive chriſtians*, of thoſe who were the *firſt preachers*, and the *firſt profeſſors* of the Goſpel; and when we think of their zeal in the cauſe of Chriſtianity which even *conſumed them*, be aſhamed to reflect on our own coldneſs and indifference. Let us further conſider that we are [r] *not our own, but bought with a price*; and that it is but reaſonable, and what gratitude will oblige us to, to live to him who died for us. And finally, that if to us *to live be Chriſt*, then, and then only, *to die will be gain*; that we ſhall then be able with more confidence to commend our departing ſpirits into his hands, after we have proved the ſincerity of our love to him in the whole courſe of our actions, and ſhall not be [t] *aſhamed before him at his coming*, as he will not be aſhamed of us.

" O moſt merciful Saviour, dwell in our " hearts by faith, fill us with thy ſpirit, in- " ſpire us with thy love! The *Seraphim*, " thy heavenly miniſters, are a *flame of fire*; " ſo are all thoſe pure and bleſſed ſpirits " that dwell near the throne; ſo fain would " we be too, amidſt all our darkneſs and " imperfections; ſo would we burn with " love to our divine Maſter, ſo ſhine with " his

[r] 1 Cor. vi. 19. [t] 1 John ii. 28.

" his likeneſs, and ſerve him with the ſame
" faithfulneſs and delight. Then we know
" we ſhall never fall, never be diſappointed
" of our hopes, but *an enterance ſhall be*
" *miniſtred to us abundantly into the everlaſt-*
" *ing kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Je-*
" *ſus Chriſt.*"

The End of the FIRST VOLUME.

To be corrected.

PAGE 13. line 21. after they, put a period. p. 60. l. 21. for and r. an. p. 95. l. 27. for is r. in. p. 168. l. 2. for into r. in. p. 180. l. 29. for is r. in. p. 183. laſt line, add [f] to the Note. p. 202. l. 31. after alaſs, put a comma. p. 256. l. 13. for preceps r. precepts.